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Bumrah's return, Jofra's comeback

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Bharat bandh: 25 cr strike against 'anti-labour' policies

Kerala sees complete shutdown, violence reported in Bengal

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

A nationwide strike called by ten major trade unions against the central government's labour and economic policies had mixed effects across the country on Wednesday, with normal life largely unaffected in many states, though sporadic violence was reported in parts of West Bengal.

The strike, supported by over 25 crore workers according to union estimates, targeted the Modi government's labour codes, contractualisation, privatisation of PSUs, and demanded a minimum wage of 26,000. The unions also backed farmers' demands for minimum support prices based on the Swaminathan Commission's formula and loan waivers.

While the strike saw partial or complete shutdowns in states like Kerala, West Bengal, Odisha, Assam, Puducherry, and Jharkhand, other regions such as Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh remained largely unaffected.

In West Bengal, clashes broke out between Left activists and police, along with reported confrontations with TMC supporters in several districts. CPI(M) state secretary Mohammed Salim claimed mass participation in banking, insurance, and transport sectors.

Kerala, ruled by the CPI(M), witnessed a near-total bandh, with public services severely impacted. In Puducherry, public transport was off the roads, and many schools declared holidays. Similar disruptions were seen in Assam and Meghalaya, where taxi and tea garden workers joined the strike.

The strike caused disruption to public transport in Haryana, with sit-in protests at bus terminals in Hisar, Bhiwani, Kaithal and Kurukshetra. Odisha's capital Bhubaneswar also reported affected road movement.

Banking operations faced disruption in several states, especially Madhya Pradesh, where around 40,000 employees in 8,700 branches participated. Left-leaning bank unions AIBEA, AIBOA, and BEFI reported delays in cheque clearances nationwide, affecting nearly 20 lakh crore in transactions. However, private banks and major public sector banks like SBI, PNB and BoB remained functional in most areas. The All India Power Engineers Federation claimed over 27 lakh power sector workers joined the protest against privatisation.

In Delhi, normal life and business activities remained unaffected. The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) reported that all 700 markets and 56 industrial areas functioned normally. Trade unions held a procession and a public rally at Jantar Mantar, addressed by national leaders.

Originally scheduled for 20 May, the strike was postponed due to the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor. The participating unions include INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, AIUTUC, TUCC, SEWA, AICCTU, LPF and UTUC. —*PTI*

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Members of various trade unions protest during a 24-hour nationwide general strike against the Central government's alleged anti-labour policies in Bengaluru on Wednesday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

- The strike caused disruption to public transport in Haryana, with sit-in protests at bus terminals in Hisar, Bhiwani, Kaithal and Kurukshetra. Odisha's capital Bhubaneswar also reported affected road movement.

Yaccarino steps down as CEO of Musk's X

NEW YORK, 9 JULY

X CEO Linda Yaccarino said she's stepping down after two years running Elon Musk's social media platform. Yaccarino posted a message on Wednesday and said "the best is yet to come as X enters a new chapter with" Musk's artificial intelligence company xAI. Musk hired Yaccarino, a veteran ad executive, in 2023 buying Twitter for $44 billion.—*PTI*

Starlink gets final nod for launch in India

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

India's space regulator INSPACe has granted Elon Musk's Starlink authorisation to offer satellite-based internet services in the country. The approval enables Starlink Satellite Communications Pvt Ltd (SSCPL), New Delhi, to deploy its Starlink Gen1 Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite constellation. The authorisation, valid for five years from 8 July or until the end of Gen1's operational life, allows SSCPL to provide satellite communication services across India. However, service rollout is contingent upon additional regulatory clearances and spectrum allocation by relevant government bodies. Starlink, developed by Musk's SpaceX, became the third firm — after Eutelsat OneWeb and Jio Satellite Communications — to secure a licence from the Department of Telecommunications. —*PTI*

Makers of 'Janaki vs State of Kerala' to modify title

KOCHI, 9 JULY

The makers of 'Janaki vs State of Kerala', starring Union Minister Suresh Gopi, informed the Kerala High Court on Wednesday that they were willing to change the film's title to 'V Janaki' or 'Janaki V', as suggested by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC). The film's producers had filed a plea challenging the CBFC's objection to the original title 'Janaki'. The Censor Board had cited potential religious sensitivity, as Hindu Goddess Sita is also called 'Janaki'. Janaki in the film is the lead character and a rape survivor, who fights a legal battle against the state. The CBFC agreed to grant clearance within three days of resubmission. —*PTI*

Girls stripped as blood found in school washroom

BENGALURU, 9 JULY

Girls of classes 5 and 10 in the RS Damani School in Shahapur in Maharashtra's Thane district were asked to strip and examined by teachers for periods after blood stains were found in the bathroom. The incident, which occurred on 8 July, sparked anger among parents of the students. After spotting drops of blood in the school bathroom, the school administration summoned the girls to enquire about their periods. Parents claimed that a few students were asked to remove their undergarments. Terming the incident disgraceful, parents demanded the arrest of the school principal and said that girls should be educated about this natural process. Many students were reportedly to be in a state of shock. The parents also held a protest in front of the school the following day.—*Agencies*

10 killed after a part of bridge collapses in Gujarat

VADODARA, 9 JULY

Ten people, including two siblings, were killed and nine others rescued, some of them with injuries, after multiple vehicles plunged into the Mahisagar river when a portion of a four-decade-old bridge collapsed in Vadodara district on Wednesday morning, officials said.

A slab of the Gambhira bridge, which connects central Gujarat to Saurashtra region and is located near Padra town, caved in, killing ten people, Superintendent of Police Rohan Anand said.

Visuals showed the entire chunk of the slab of the bridge, about 10 to 15 metres long, between two piers collapsing at around 7.30am.

Five out of nine who were rescued are getting treated at state-run SSG Hospital in Vadodara city, Anand said, adding none of them is in a critical condition.

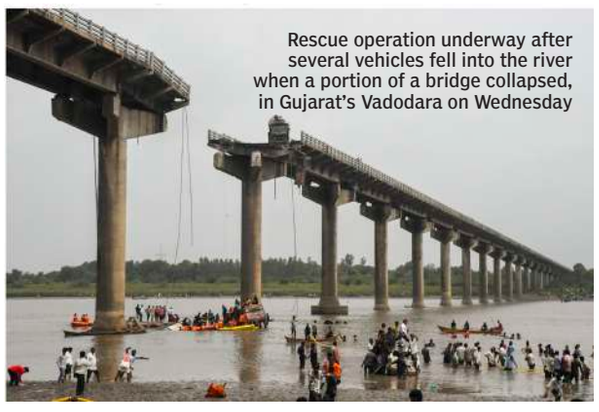
The rescue operation, involving fire brigade personnel, local residents as well as a team of National Disaster Response Force, was still underway, officials said.

At least half a dozen vehicles -- two trucks, two vans, an autorickshaw and a two-wheeler -- fell into the river, Vadodara Collector Anil Dhameliya said.

Two other vehicles that came dangerously close to falling in the river were dragged away to a safer location, the collector said.

Three people on a two-wheeler, which fell into the river, managed to swim to safety, he added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel expressed grief over the tragedy and announced ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh and Rs 4 lakh, respectively, to the next of kin of each deceased and Rs 50,000 as compensation to the injured. —*PTI*



Rescue operation underway after several vehicles fell into the river when a portion of a bridge collapsed, in Gujarat's Vadodara on Wednesday

3RD INCIDENT THIS YEAR

2 pilots killed as IAF jet crashes in Rajasthan

JAIPUR/NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

Two pilots of the Indian Air Force (IAF) were killed on Wednesday morning in a crash of a Jaguar trainer aircraft near Churu in Rajasthan.

This marks the third accident involving the ageing fleet in 2025. Earlier crashes were reported from Panchkula in Haryana in March and near Jamnagar in Gujarat in April.

The repeated crashes have triggered renewed concerns about the safety and operational viability of the Jaguar aircraft, which has been part of the IAF fleet for over 40 years. Originally developed in the 1960s as a twin-engine, supersonic ground attack aircraft, the Jaguar was once among the IAF's frontline platforms. However, questions around its continued use have increased in recent years due to ageing and obsolescence.

The IAF said a court of inquiry has been constituted to ascertain the cause of the accident.

"An IAF Jaguar Trainer aircraft met with an accident during a routine training mission and crashed near Churu in Rajasthan, today," it said in a statement.

The aircraft crashed in an agricultural field in Bhanoda village around 1.25pm, SHO of Rajaldesar, Kamlesh, said. He said human body parts were found near the crash site. —*PTI*

Smoke billows out after IAF's Jaguar fighter jet crashed near Churu in Rajasthan **PHOTO: PTI**

Namibia to launch UPI, eyes to boost defence ties with India

WINDHOEK, 9 JULY

Namibia will roll out the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) later this year, it was announced on Wednesday following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Namibian President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah that focused on imparting a new momentum to the bilateral ties.

The Modi-Ndaitwah meeting primarily focused on bolstering bilateral cooperation in areas such as digital technology, defence, security, agriculture, healthcare, education and critical minerals. —*PTI*

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi being conferred with Namibia's highest civilian award, 'Order of the Most Ancient Welwitschia Mirabilis', by Namibian President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, in Windhoek, Namibia in Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Army General warns India against Pak-China-B'desh tie up

NEW DELHI/NEW YORK/ WASHINGTON, 9 JULY

Possible convergence of interest among China, Pakistan, and Bangladesh may result in serious implications for India's stability and security dynamics, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen Anil Chauhan said on Tuesday.

The top military officer said economic distress in the countries in the Indian Ocean region has given "outside powers" to leverage their influence which could create vulnerabilities for India.

Trump prevented India-Pak war: Rubio

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that under President Donald Trump's leadership, America "prevented and ended" a war between India and Pakistan. A day earlier, Trump had again repeated the claim that he stopped the war. —*PTI*

US short seller calls Vedanta a house of cards built on debt

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

US short seller Viceroy Research on Wednesday called billionaire Anil Agarwal-led British firm Vedanta Resources a "parasite" that is "systematically draining" its Indian unit, an allegation which the group called as "selective misinformation and baseless" aimed at discrediting it.

The US firm took a short position against the debt of Vedanta Resources, the UK-based parent of Indian miner Vedanta Ltd, alleging that the group "is a house of cards built on a foundation of unsustainable debt, looted assets, and accounting fiction.".

Viceroy said it is shorting the debt stack of Vedanta Resources — the parent and majority owner of Mumbai-listed Vedanta Ltd (VEDL). Shorting debt is a strategy where investors profit from a decline in bond prices.

The report described VRL as a "heavily indebted parent" and a "parasite" company with no significant operations, reliant entirely on cash from Vedanta Ltd, which it claims is "dying". —*PTI*

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FIGHT OVER SHOPPING

B'luru man kills wife by stamping her neck

BENGALURU, 9 JULY

A 29-year-old woman was killed by her husband in Bengaluru's Bommanahalli after he threw her to the ground and kept his foot on her neck following a heated argument that spiralled out of control.

Padmaja was allegedly strangled and trampled to death by her husband, Harish Kumar, during a fight at their home on Tuesday. the couple was from Srinivaspur, Karnataka. They were both engineering graduates who had moved to Bengaluru for work. Padmaja was employed at a private firm, while Harish had quit his job a few months ago. The couple, parents of two children, had been facing frequent marital issues and arguments.

On the night of the incident, a quarrel over Padmaja going out shopping escalated. In a fit of rage, Harish allegedly strangled her, then pushed her to the ground and pressed his foot against her neck until she stopped breathing.

The Bommanahalli Police have registered a case under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and are continuing their investigation. The children are now in the care of relatives. —Agencies

- The couple, parents of two children, had been facing frequent marital issues and arguments.

PHOTO: FREEPIK AI IMAGE

2 men rape B'luru woman at friend's home; steal fridge

BENGALURU, 9 JULY

A 35-year-old woman was allegedly gangraped and extorted by two men at her friend's house here and fled with a refrigerator and washing machine from the house, claiming it was to settle a loan, police said on Wednesday.

Four men have been arrested in incident that occurred on 7 July under the jurisdiction of Parappana Agrahara Police Station.

According to the police, in her complaint, the woman, who is a beautician, has alleged that two men forcibly entered her friend's house and raped her.

Following the assault, they allegedly demanded money and coerced her to transfer Rs 20,000 to an account, which was then moved to a betting app.

Citing the complainant, the officer said that the accused also snatched two mobile phones. —*PTI*

Rajasthan man arrested for tax evasion

BENGALURU, 9 JULY

A Rajasthan-based man was arrested in connection with major bogus billings and tax evasions that allegedly caused substantial loss to the state's revenue, the Karnataka Commercial Taxes Department said. Officials from the Enforcement South Zone and Intelligence Wing of the Commercial Taxes Department, with assistance from the Bengaluru East Police, took into custody Kailash Villoy, a resident of Jalore district in Rajasthan. The arrest was made in Bengaluru, a statement issued by the department said. According to the department, Villoy had opened multiple bank accounts using fake Aadhaar cards and obtained goods and services tax (GST) registrations in their names. These were then used to issue fake tax invoices running into hundreds of crores of rupees. *—PTI*

PM's Principal Secy visits HAL to review projects

BENGALURU, 9 JULY

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Dr PK Mishra, visited Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to review key indigenous defence projects. Accompanied by HAL CMD DK Sunil and board members, he began his visit at the LCA Mk 2 hangar at the Aircraft Research and Design Centre, later inspecting the LCA Tejas Assembly Hangar and Aerospace Division. HAL showcased six LCA Mk 1A fighters and two Mk 1 trainers, reaffirming its commitment to lead future multi-stakeholder programmes. Mishra reviewed production progress on the Tejas Mk 1A and praised HAL's role in advancing self-reliant defence capabilities. He also visited Tata Electronics' semiconductor fabrication plant and social infrastructure projects developed by DICDL. In a review meeting, Mishra emphasised timely completion, quality execution, and stakeholder-centric planning across key connectivity and industrial projects. *—ANI*

Govt inks MoU with realty firm to boost govt schools

BENGALURU, 9 JULY

The State government has signed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bengaluru-based real estate firm Embassy Group to enhance 40 government schools across the City. Effective from May 2025 to April 2028, the Rs 15 crore initiative aims to provide educational resources, infrastructure upgrades, and health programmes. Embassy will supply learning kits, run programmes in Maths, English, Kannada, and Sports, and offer after-school academic support. The initiative also includes scholarships, mentorship, career guidance, and support for guest and full-time teachers. School infrastructure will be improved through repairs, new buildings, and daily maintenance. Officials hailed the partnership—first established in 2018—as a model for long-term, sustainable development in education. Embassy hopes to inspire similar collaborations in future *—PTI*

No Cabinet reshuffle on cards: DKS

CM and his deputy visit the party High Command in Delhi amid power sharing tussle

NEW DELHI/ BENGALURU, 9 JULY

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Wednesday dismissed speculation about leadership change in the Congress-led government in the State, saying there are currently no plans to alter the Cabinet composition.

"No Cabinet reshuffle is on the cards. Myself and the Chief Minister are meeting Central ministers to discuss various State issues," Shivakumar told reporters.

When asked about taking over as Chief Minister, Shivakumar termed it media speculation and clarified there is no such plan.

Despite Shivakumar's firm denial, his and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah proposed meeting with the party High Command furthered speculations.

Asked if he met Sonia Gandhi, he said, "I did not meet Sonia Gandhi but I have asked for time from senior leaders. I can't meet any one if I don't get an appointment."

SOUGHT RS 11,122.76 CRORE FUNDS

Shivakumar, who also holds the irrigation portfolio, said that he appealed for funds to the tune of Rs 11,122.76 crore for six irrigation projects in the State. Shivakumar said he met Union Environment and Jal Shakti ministers on Tuesday.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar meets State legislators in New Delhi, on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

"We have appealed to the Centre for Rs 11,122.76 funds for six irrigation projects in the State – Rs 804.66 crore for Sonthi lift irrigation project; Rs 2,660.70 crore for Indi branch canal in Upper Krishna project; Rs 3000 crore for third stage of Malaprabha canal; Rs 1,44.42 crore for Ghataprabha right bund canal and Chikkodi branch canal; Rs 1610 crore for flood prevention project at Bennehalla," he said. "We have learnt that one project has been approved, but we are yet to receive official confirmation."

Shivakumar said that the State also appealed for 25 per cent of the funds for the Yettinahole project. He said the Centre has stalled works in Tumkur and Hassan districts citing forest land issues. "We have given alternative land and sought early forest clearance so that work can continue," he said.

On the Upper Bhadra project, he said, "We submitted the revised cost estimates as asked by the Centre, and they have said the funds would be released. But there is no guarantee until the funds hit State government's account."

Asked why the Rs 5,300 funds were delayed, he said, "What to do? The Congress came to power in the State."

Shivakumar also said that he the State sought the Union Jal Shakthi minister's approval for the Mekedatu drinking water project. "He has assured us that he would speak to Tamil Nadu about this".

On the Krishna water sharing meeting, he said that the previous meeting was cancelled and that the next meeting was scheduled for July. "Though the Tribunal's order has allowed us to increase the height of Almatti dam, we are not allowed to do it as the Centre is yet to issue a Gazette notification on the same. I have appealed to the Union minister to call for a meeting among Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana".

Shivakumar said he also sought early forest clearance for the Kalasa-Banduri Project from the Centre, saying the tender has already been issued. "Goa has said that we have raised objection for its request to lay a power transmission line through Karnataka. We have told them that we would support them if they support us on Kalasa-Banduri project.... Goa cannot dictate us. Let the central government decide this matter".

Union Minister V Somanna accompanied Shivakumar during his meetings.

—Salar News with Agencies

CM SEEKS RAJNATH'S NOD FOR DASARA AIR SHOW, DEFENCE CORRIDOR

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

CM Siddaramaiah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh *PHOTO: PTI*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday to request that the annual air show be held during the upcoming Dasara festival and a defence corridor project be allocated for the State.

"(We) discussed three main issues," Siddaramaiah told reporters after the meeting. He said he discussed the holding of the air show that has become a signature event during Mysuru Dasara, celebrated in September-end.

Siddaramaiah also demanded a defence corridor for State, like in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

He also sought defence land for the implementation of three key projects -- tunnel project, link road on the airport Bellary road and flyover double-decker road -- in the State.

"He has agreed to the air show, while responding positively to other proposals," he said.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar hit out at Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy for "empty talk" and a lack of effort in getting funds from the Centre for State projects.

"Kumaraswamy has been doing a lot of empty talk, let him get funds first," he said. He was replying to a reporter who asked if there was a war between him and Kumaraswamy for claiming credit for the tunnel project in City in view latter's meeting with Union Minister Nitin Gadkari.

—Salar with agencies

BHARAT BANDH

Members of various trade unions protest during a 24-hour nationwide general strike, at Freedom park in Bengaluru on Wednesday. The bandh was called by trade unions to oppose the Central government's alleged anti labour policies *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

Normal life unaffected in State during national strike

BENGALURU, 9 JULY

Normal life remained largely unaffected in State on Wednesday despite protests in various places during the nationwide strike called by trade unions opposing the Central government's alleged "anti-labour" policies.

Buses of Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) and Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) were seen plying on the roads as usual. Autos and cab facilities were also available for commuters.

Schools and colleges remained open as the State government has not declared a holiday for educational institutions.

Members of various labour organisations protested at Freedom Park. The protesters demanded that the amendment to the labour laws should be withdrawn, anti-labour policies and the proposal to increase the working hours of employees be junked.

In Hubballi, members of various trade unions under the Joint Committee of Trade Unions marched opposing the alleged anti-worker, anti-farmer and anti-national pro-corporate policies of the government.

(It's) a desperate attempt to draw Prime Minister Modi's attention to the growing joblessness and the government's inaction.... India now ranks as the 50th poorest country in the world by per capita GDP.... Lower than countries like Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kenya, and even Haiti.

-Randeep Singh Surjewala, Congress General Secretary

Similarly, a rally was organised in Mysuru by AITUC (All India Trade Union Congress) and other organisations. In Bidar too, workers, including women, took to the streets.

The 24-hour strike has been called by the Joint Platform of Trade Unions, which comprises 10 central trade unions (CTUs) along with independent all-India sectoral federations and associations. *—PTI*

3 OF A 4-MEMBER FAMILY IN BELAGAVI DIE BY SUICIDE

BELAGAVI, 9 JULY

Three members of a family were found dead at their residence in Belagavi and one in a critical condition after allegedly consuming poison in what appears to be a suicide attempt.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Rohan Jagadish identified the deceased as a 44-year-old Mangala Kuradekar, her daughter Suvarna and son Santosh Kuradekar. Another daughter was found unconscious and was immediately rushed to the Civil Hospital in Belagavi, where her condition is critical.

The family was in the goldsmith business. Jagadish said that a suicide note revealed that the family had been in financial distress after they were allegedly cheated by a fellow goldsmith, leading them to take the extreme step.

Sources said that Mangala, the head of the family, hailed from Uttara Kannada district and settled in Belagavi. She had been in the Sharapur goldsmith business for many years. Her husband had died few years ago.

Post-mortem reports confirmed the ingestion of Aqua Regia, a highly corrosive chemical used in gold purification. Medical staff described the substance as potentially more lethal than cyanide.

—Salar News

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support

HC directs Prajwal Revanna to seek bail from Sessions Court

BENGALURU, 9 JULY

The State High Court (HC) on Wednesday directed suspended JD(S) leader Prajwal Revanna to approach sessions court for bail in the high-profile rape case filed against him.

The court clarified that Revanna could return to HC if necessary, after the lower court considers his plea.

Justice SR Krishna Kumar, who presided over the matter, observed that it would be more appropriate for Revanna

to exhaust all remedies before the trial court before seeking intervention from HC.

This marks the second attempt by Revanna to secure bail. Senior Advocate Prabhuling Navadgi, who appeared for Revanna, argued that court was well within its powers to hear the bail application directly.

Following Navadgi's request, the HC directed the trial court to decide on the fresh bail application within 10 days from the date of its filing.

Revanna is the primary accused in four separate FIRs involving allegations of sexual assault, voyeurism, and circulation of obscene material.

City trial court has already framed several charges against Revanna. *—PTI*

Let voters decide my future: GT Devegowda

MYSURU, 9 JULY

Disgruntled JD(S) MLA and former minister GT Devegowda, who is maintaining distance from party activities, said on Wednesday that he will decide his next political move after discussing it with people of his Chamundeshwari assembly segment.

Speaking to reporters here, he said that his voters will decide whether he should stay with the JD(S) or join either Congress or BJP.

"I may have supported BJP to make Yediyurappa the chief minister once, but now I am elected from JD(S). There are still three years left for the assembly polls. Even though I am upset with party leaders for not recognising my seniority while choosing JD(S) floor leader in the assembly, I will continue with the party.

On Wednesday, Devegowda also participated in an indefinite strike by members of Mysuru City Corporation (MCC) Pourakarmika Federation outside the MCC office of in the City.

He appealed to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy CM DK Shivakumar and Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh to respond immediately to the agitating workers' demands, as continued strike will affect civic services, such as the removal of garbage across the City. *—Salar News*

Congress only complains about vote theft where it loses, says BJP

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

At a 'Bihar Bandh' rally on Wednesday, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav levelled serious allegations against the Election Commission, accusing it of electoral manipulation. In response, BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla claimed said, "They target institutions only when results don't favour them."

He pointed out that the same leaders had praised the Election Commission after victories in Karnataka, Telangana, and Himachal Pradesh, but questioned its integrity following losses in Maharashtra and Haryana.

"This isn't about the EC; it's about conditional commitment," he said. *—ANI*

Law and order has improved greatly, says HM

MANGALURU, 9 JULY

State Home Minister G Parameshwara on Wednesday said the law and order situation in the state, including Dakshina Kannada district, is stable and improving because of strict enforcement measures and the creation of special task forces.

Speaking to reporters after offering prayers at Kukke Subrahmanya temple, he said, "At a recent conference chaired by Chief Minister, we reviewed crime trends across the State. Crime rates have declined, and law enforcement is being taken seriously, especially in sensitive districts."

Maintaining peace in coastal regions is critical to fostering economic growth and job creation. The minister informed that recruitment is underway to address personnel shortages in the police department. He said the government would consider increasing number of 112 emergency vehicles and examine proposals regarding new police outposts and relocation of the SP's office. *—PTI*

MOST ARE NON-CARDIAC PATIENTS

Sudden deaths leads to spike in health checkups in Mysuru

MYSURU, 9 JULY

Fears over rising incidents of sudden cardiac deaths have led to a significant spike in outpatient visits to Mysuru hospitals — but ironically, most are non-cardiac patients.

At Jayadeva Hospital alone, OPD footfall has gone up by 25 per cent recently. Over the past two weeks, heart health check-ups have shot up. A large number of people from Mysuru including neighbouring Hassan, Mandya, Chamarajanagar, Madikeri arrived at the hospital for check-up in panic.

On Wednesday, police deployed personnel for crowd management, to maintain que

system outside Jayadeva institute of Cardiovascular Science and Research Institute in Kumbarakoppal in Mysuru.

However, experts are urging the public to avoid panic and seek rational medical advice.

District Health Officer Dr PC Kumaraswamy on Wednesday appealed to the public to not to panic over the sudden cardiac deaths.

- Over the past two weeks, heart health check-ups have shot up in Mysuru's Jayadeva Hospital with OPD footfall increasing by 25 per cent after the surge in cardiac deaths in State

He said that the State government has launched STEMI scheme aimed at improving cardiac care for heart attack patients, particularly in rural areas, by ensuring rapid diagnosis and treatment within the crucial "golden hour". The program utilises a hub-and-spoke model, connecting tertiary hospitals with cath labs (hubs) to district and taluk hospitals (spokes) for timely intervention.

Under the scheme, the department has screened and conducted the ECG on 32,845 personnel suffering from heart, diabetes, and other related complaints at its hospitals. Out of them, it detected 221 heart patients and recommended treatment for 176 people at Jayadeva hospital in Mysuru.

It also screened 13 lakh people suffering from diabetes, hypertension under the scheme in Mysuru district, he said. *—Salar News*

10-year-old dies of cardiac arrest

A-ten-year-old boy in Class 4 died of cardiac arrest while attending the classes at government lower primary school in Gundlupet town of Chamarajanagar district. The deceased boy, Manjokumar, had been suffering from a heart disease. He reportedly developed chest pain and collapsed while attending class.

NIA books Kolar man for giving sims to extremists

KOLAR, 9 JULY

NIA sleuths raided Satish Gowda, a resident of Bhatrahalli village near Kolar, for allegedly providing sim cards to extremists. Gowda has reportedly been under the NIA radar for the past three years.

The NIA sleuths arrived at his house at around 8.30pm on Tuesday during which time he reportedly fled the scene. The NIA then issued a notice to Gowda and his wife, Hema, asking them to appear before the authorities in City on Wednesday.

Gowda, who hailed from Vanarasi, another village in Kolar, had worked with Airtel

for several years. Following his marriage, he stopped working for Airtel and was instead working at a sim distributor shop near Koramangala.

Hema said the NIA authorities had previously served him a notice during 2023, stating that there were some discrepancies over allocating sim cards to customers. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

HC raps cops over closing 124 cases against Ponmudy

CHENNAI, 9 JULY

The Madras High Court on Tuesday criticised Tamil Nadu Police for closing 124 complaints against former DMK minister K Ponmudy over alleged hate speech targeting women and Saivite and Vaishnavite communities. Hearing a suo motu contempt case, the HC said it could not stay silent when politicians cross the line and questioned the police's authority to shut complaints after preliminary inquiries under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), stressing that only courts can decide such matters. The court warned of serious consequences if complainants weren't notified. "Freedom of speech is not absolute," HC observed, calling for strong action and adjourned the matter to 1 August. *—Agencies*

Aadhaar must in schemes for disabled: Govt

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

The Centre has made it mandatory for beneficiaries under the National Action Plan for Skill Development of Persons with Disabilities to either furnish their Aadhaar number or provide proof of having applied for it in order to receive scheme benefits. At the same time, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment clarified that no eligible child would be denied benefits for want of Aadhaar or authentication failure. In a gazette notification, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment ministry said Aadhaar authentication is essential for accessing cash benefits under the scheme, including transport allowance, boarding and lodging, conveyance and post-placement support. *—PTI*

Bengali workers labeled illegals in Odisha: TMC

KOLKATA/ BHUBANESWAR, 9 JULY

The TMC on Wednesday alleged that the BJP-ruled Odisha government has illegally detained Bengali-speaking migrant workers on the pretext of identifying illegal immigrants, despite the labourers possessing "valid documents". The ruling party in West Bengal demanded their immediate release and warned of a larger political movement if such "targeted harassment" continues. A senior Odisha Police officer, however, said the detained people lack valid documents to establish their residency or citizenship. TMC MPs Mahua Moitra and Samirul Islam, who also serves as Chairman of the Migrant Workers' Welfare Board have condemned the "illegal detention". *—PTI*

Bihar boils over poll roll revision

Opposition, activists and common people join in protest against EC's move

Security personnel stand guard as agitators stop a train during a protest amid 'Bihar bandh' called by the INDIA bloc against Special Intensive Revision in the state, at Sachiwalay Halt Railway station in Patna **PHOTO: PTI**

PATNA, 9 JULY

As the nationwide general strike called by trade unions to protest the Centre's alleged anti-labour policies erupted on Wednesday, Bihar protested against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls on Wednesday.

Opposition parties, activists, and common people have criticised the Election Commission's SIR process as it threatens to "disenfranchise a substantial number of voters", barely a few months ahead of the Assembly polls.

Though the INDIA bloc has expressed its support to the nationwide 'chakka jam', in Bihar, the coalition chose to also highlight its reservations agains t the SIR.

Several opposition leaders including Congress' Rahul Gandhi, RJD's Tejashwi Yadav besides D Raja, MA Baby and Dipankar Bhattacharya, general secretaries of CPI, CPI(M) and CPI(ML) respectively, in a giant procession that commenced at the Income Tax crossing, close to vital installations like the Patna High Court.

The leaders stood atop an open vehicle and addressed a vast sea of party workers and protesters as they marched towards the EC office.

The procession met with barricades in front of the Vidhan Sabha premises, a stone's throw from the EC office, where the leaders chose to address the gathering.

Though no violent clashes were reported from any part of the city, attempts to block rail and road traffic in several parts were witnessed.

"The EC has hatched a conspiracy to deprive people, mostly Dalits and other vulnerable sections, of their voting rights," alleged Yadav, whose own constituency falls in Seemanchal region – which is teeming with "illegal immigrants" from Bangladesh and Myanmar, according to the BJP. *—PTI*

'M'rashtra polls rigged, won't allow it in Bihar'

PATNA, 9 JULY

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday alleged that the 2024 Maharashtra assembly elections were "rigged" to favour the BJP and claimed that the NDA government at the Centre wants to repeat it in the Bihar polls due later this year.

He was addressing the INDIA bloc workers and protesters as they marched to the Election Commission's office in Patna.

Gandhi alleged that SIR was an extension of the 'Maharashtra model' of fudging electoral rolls and would "steal not just people's right to vote but their entire future."

The Congress leader also alleged that instead of protecting the Constitution, the EC is working on "instructions from the BJP" and that SIR is an attempt to steal the elections. Waving a red copy of the Constitution, that has become his style, he said, "The EC has, of late, been speaking the language of the BJP-RSS".

"We've already exposed the Maharashtra model," Gandhi said, alluding to the alleged addition of 'bogus voters' in electoral rolls of the state where the BJP-led coalition achieved a landslide victory in Assembly polls last year, months after being drubbed in the Lok Sabha elections.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court, set to hear a batch of pleas on SIR in Bihar on 10 July, agreed to hear the plea of two more activists against the revision. *—PTI*

LoP in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, along with CPI (ML) General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya and others, addresses supporters during a protest amid 'Bihar bandh' called by the INDIA bloc in Patna on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

House of UP 'conversion racket' accused bulldozed

BALRAMPUR, 9 JULY

Authorities in Uttar Pradesh's Balrampur on Wednesday demolished alleged illegal constructions on government land by Jalaluddin alias Chhangur Baba, recently arrested by the UP Anti-Terrorism Squad for running a religious conversion racket.

Additional SP Vishal Pandey confirmed that the encroachment in Madhyapur village was verified and eight bulldozers were deployed to remove the structures. The accused reportedly holds Rs 106 crore across 40 bank accounts, mostly funded from the Middle East, and owns properties worth crores. Officials are also probing potential terror links.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath termed Jalaluddin's actions as "anti-social and anti-national", vowing strict legal action and property seizure.

Chhangur Baba was arrested on Saturday along with his aide Neetu alias Nasreen, both residents of Madhpur. A non-bailable warrant had been issued, with a 50,000 reward on his arrest.

The case, registered in Lucknow under various sections of the BNS and the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Act, alleges he forcibly converted poor labourers, widows, and others through inducement or intimidation. His son and another aide were arrested earlier in April. *—PTI*

India, Namibia sign key MoUs during Modi's visit

WINDHOEK, 9 JULY

India and Namibia on Tuesday signed multiple agreements to strengthen bilateral cooperation following delegation-level talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah in Windhoek.

Two key Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed — one for establishing an Entrepreneurship Development Centre in Namibia and another on cooperation in health and medicine.

Additionally, Namibia formally joined the India-backed Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and the Global Biofuels Alliance.

CDRI aims to enhance infrastructure resilience against climate and disaster risks, involving national governments, international bodies and the private sector.

"This visit marks a significant step in India-Namibia ties," Modi said, adding that discussions covered cooperation in digital technology, defence, agriculture, healthcare, education, security, and critical minerals.

The leaders also explored boosting trade, energy and petrochemical linkages.

Modi thanked Namibia for its support in Project Cheetah, under which Indian cheetahs were relocated from Namibia.

This is Modi's first visit to Namibia and only the third by an Indian Prime Minister. He arrived from Brazil, concluding his five-nation tour.

Modi also paid tribute to Namibia's founding President, Sam Nujoma, at the Heroes' Acre memorial. *—PTI*

Arunachal shares border with Tibet, not China: Khandu

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu showed on Wednesday that two can play that game when it comes to name mangling.

In a subtle geopolitical mic drop, Khandu said his state does not share a border with China. If that sounds factually ignorant, think again. The 1,200 km international border in Arunachal is with Tibet, not with China, he pointed out.

CHINA OR TIBET?

When it was suggested that Arunachal Pradesh shares a 1,200 km border with China, Khandu quickly intervened and said, "Let me correct you here. We share a border with Tibet and not China."

The CM said no state in India directly shares a border with China, only with Tibet, and that region was forcibly occupied by China in the 1950s. He said historical facts back the fact that it was an Indo-Tibet border.

'China's mega dam a water bomb'

Khandu also said that China's mega dam being built near the Arunachal Pradesh border will be a ticking "water bomb", an existential threat and a bigger issue apart from the military threat. *—PTI*

On China's habit of giving its new names to places in his state, Khandu said that China has renamed places not once but five times.

All eyes are now on BJP as it gears up to elect its next national president. Reports suggest that the party is poised to appoint its first-ever woman national president. Reportedly, the RSS is also said to be on board with the decision. Interestingly, most of the women contenders for the post hail from South India.

HERE ARE THE TOP CONTENDERS

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN, 65

- From Madurai, Tamil Nadu.
- 2nd female to be the Union Finance Minister and previous defence minister.
- Ten years of experience in the Cabinet.
- Could play a crucial role in BJP's plan to make inroads in TN.
- TN will go to polls in 2026.

VANATHI SRINIVASAN, 55

- Lawyer turned politician from Tamil Nadu.
- Current national president of BJP Mahila Morcha.
- She defeated actor-turned-politician Kamal Hassan in Coimbatore South seat in 2021.
- However, her limited fluency in Hindi is considered a drawback.

D PURANDESWARI, 65

- She is Andhra CM N Chandrababu Naidu's sister-in-law.
- She is LS MP from Rajahmundry.
- Joined BJP in 2014 after leaving Congress.
- Known as the 'Sushma Swaraj of the South'.
- Former president of BJP's Andhra unit.
- Represented India as part of 'Operation Sindoor' delegation.

DR SUDHA YADAV, 59

- A member of BJP's central election committee and its parliamentary board.
- A confidant of PM Narendra Modi and RSS.
- Holds a PhD from IIT Roorkee.

- Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, former MP CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan, former Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar

- Tamil Nadu BJP Vice President K Annamalai and Union Minister of Consumer Affairs Pralhad Joshi are also being considered.

Cong may even go solo in M'rashtra civic polls: Chavan

MUMBAI, 9 JULY

Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan has said not be surprised if the Congress decides to go solo in Mumbai and other civic body polls in the state likely to be held later this year. He also targeted the Devendra Fadnavis government over the law and order in the state, pointing at workers of the Raj Thackeray-led MNS assaulting people for not speaking in Marathi. "The Congress party's stand is that our alliance is with our INDIA alliance partners – Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP). If they want to do a sub alliance with some other party, like-minded party, that's their business. But if they want to make an alliance with people who are fundamentally opposed to the Congress ideology – ideology of secularism, ideology of what Ambedkar wrote in the Constitution – then we will not accept that," he added. *—PTI*

Didi fumes as Bengal named Bihar in NITI Ayog's map

KOLKATA, 9 JULY

PHOTO: X/SAKET GOKHALE MP

- West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee condemned the error and demanded an apology, besides taking immediate corrective measures in this connection

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday wrote to the Vice Chairperson of the NITI Aayog, expressing her strong disapproval over the state being mislabeled as Bihar in their official summary report.

She condemned the error and demanded an apology, besides taking immediate corrective measures in this connection.

Earlier in the day, Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha MP Saket Gokhale, in a post on X, shared a screenshot of the map in which Bihar was shown as West Bengal. "I am writing with deep concern and unequivocal disapproval that in the 'summary report for the state of West Bengal' published by NITI Aayog and available on its website, the map intended to represent the state of West Bengal has depicted the territory of Bihar in its place," Banerjee wrote to Vice Chairperson of the NITI Aayog Suman K Bery.

Describing the error as a "grave lapse", the CM claimed that such a blunder in an official publication of NITI Aayog reflects an "alarming lack of diligence and respect" towards the states of the Union. *—PTI*

DEFENDS ACTION

Sena MLA faces flak from CM for slapping staffer over 'stale food'

MUMBAI, 9 JULY

Maharashtra Shiv Sena legislator Sanjay Gaikwad faced flak from the ruling and opposition parties alike on Wednesday after a video of him slapping an employee at the MLAs' hostel canteen in Mumbai went viral.

The video shows Gaikwad berating the canteen operator over the quality of food, refusing to pay the bill, and repeatedly slapping the staff member seated at the billing counter of the Akashvani MLA hostel.

Instead of issuing an apology for his action, the MLA apparently defended it by saying that he was served stale food despite repeated requests. "Eggs 15 days old, non-veg 15-20 days old, vegetables 2-4 days old. Nearly 5,000-10,000 people eat here, and everyone has the same complaint," he pointed out.

The video shows Gaikwad berating the canteen operator over the quality of food, refusing to pay the bill, and repeatedly slapping the staff member at the billing counter **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

Gaikwad also made a reference to Bal Thackeray while defending his action to slap the employee. Explaining his "apt" reaction, he said that Bal Thackeray allegedly taught people that ignorant people must be "cracked down upon".

Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis criticised the MLA's action and said that it impacts his image as an MLA.

Deputy CM Eknath Shinde told reporters that he does not support violence and that "beating someone is not right". *—PTI*

26/11 attacks accused Rana's custody extended

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

A Delhi court on Wednesday extended the judicial custody of Tahawwur Hussain Rana, accused in the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, until 13 August.

Rana, a close associate of 26/11 plotter David Coleman Headley, was extradited from the United States in April after the US Supreme Court rejected his appeal against extradition.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a supplementary chargesheet, which includes procedural documents and will be considered on 13 August. The court will also hear on 15 July Rana's request for phone calls with his family. He was earlier granted one monitored call.

The NIA said Rana was confronted with key evidence and was uncooperative during questioning. Voice and handwriting samples have also been taken. The 2008 attacks, carried out by Lashkar-e-Taiba, killed 166 people in Mumbai. *—PTI*

6 Manipur Meitei body members, 3 militants held

IMPHAL, 9 JULY

Manipur police have arrested nine people, including six members of Meitei organisation Arambai Tenggol (AT) and three militants of a banned outfit in Bishnupur district, a police statement said on Wednesday. The six AT members were involved in physically assaulting state police personnel during a bandh in Bishnupur district on Wednesday, it said. Meanwhile, police also arrested two militants belonging to the banned Kangleipak Communist Party, from Utlou area in Bishnupur district. "The duo was raising funds for the banned outfit by extorting money from general public and businessmen in Nambol area," the statement said. Another active cadre of the same outfit was also arrested from Moirang Okshongbung in Bishnupur district. He had extorted large sums from schools and colleges in Thoubal district. —*PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

ED raids in 11 cities in 'donkey route' case

JALANDHAR, 9 JULY

The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday conducted searches in multiple cities of Punjab and Haryana as part of a money laundering investigation into a "donkey route" case related to illegal Indian immigrants who were deported by the US this year, official sources said. Offices and houses of suspects and agents in at least 11 cities in the two states, including Amritsar, Sangrur, Patiala and Moga in Punjab, and Ambala, Kurukshetra and Karnal in Haryana, are being raided under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the sources said. The money laundering case stems from 17 FIRs registered by Punjab and Haryana police departments against the travel/visa agents and middlemen who cheated various persons willing to go to the US illegally, they said. —*PTI*

CBI extradites 1999 economic offender from US

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

The CBI has successfully extradited Monika Kapoor, an alleged economic offender, from the United States after over 25 years on the run. Kapoor fled India in 1999 following accusations of forging export documents with her brothers to obtain duty-free gold import licences, causing a Rs1.44 crore loss to the exchequer. While her brothers were convicted in 2017, Kapoor was declared a proclaimed offender in 2006. India requested her extradition in 2010; after prolonged legal battles, a US court upheld it in March 2025. Kapoor arrived in Delhi on Wednesday night with a CBI team. The agency called it a major achievement in cross-border enforcement and reaffirmed its commitment to bringing fugitives to justice.—*PTI*

HC reserves verdict on Umar Khalid, Imam's bail pleas

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday reserved its verdict on bail pleas of activists Sharjeel Imam, Umar Khalid and others facing prosecution in the alleged conspiracy case behind the February 2020 riots. The prosecution opposed the bail plea, saying riots were planned well in advance with a sinister motive and a conspiracy to defame India on a global level and mere long incarceration is no ground for bail. Imam's counsel argued his speeches and WhatsApp chats never called for any unrest. The duo and several others were booked for allegedly being the "masterminds" of the February 2020 riots in Delhi, which left 53 people dead and over 700 injured.—*PTI*

UAE denies giving Golden Visas to Indians at Rs 23L

Dubai firm apologises for 'confusion' over 'life time' visa

DUBAI, 9 JULY

The UAE's Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs and Port Security (ICP) has dismissed claims in media reports suggesting that lifetime Golden Visas for some nationalities could be obtained for all categories from outside the UAE via consulting or commercial entities under simplified conditions, saying it had "no legal basis."

Meanwhile, in a statement sent to Khaleej Times on Wednesday, the daily said the Dubai-based Rayad group has "apologised" for the "public confusion" over the purported nomination-based resident initiative, including references to a "fixed AED 100,000 fee" and a so-called "lifetime visa" arrangement.

PTI had stated that India and Bangladesh have been selected for the first phase of testing, and a consultancy named Rayad Group has been chosen to test the initial form of the nomination-based Golden Visa in India.

The categories, conditions, and regulations of the Golden Visa are clearly defined in accordance with official law ***PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE***

Based on the accounts provided by beneficiaries and people involved in the process, Indians can now enjoy the UAE's Golden Visa for life by paying a fee of AED 100,000 (around Rs 23.30 lakh) under the "new nomination-based visa policy".

The IPC clarified that the categories, conditions, and regulations of the Golden Visa are clearly defined in accordance with official laws, legislations, and ministerial decisions.

All Golden Visa applications are handled exclusively through official government channels within the UAE, and that no internal or external consultancy entity is recognised as an authorised party in the application process.

- All Golden Visa applications are handled exclusively through official government channels within the UAE, and that no internal or external consultancy entity is recognised as an authorised party in the application process.

The ICP reaffirmed its commitment to providing a safe and transparent environment for applicants, and to continuously enhancing its services exclusively through official digital platforms.

It also stated that legal action will be taken against entities spreading such false information in an attempt to illegally collect money from individuals aspiring to live and reside in the country in a dignified manner. – *PTI*

An aerial view of an area inundated with floodwater after heavy rainfall in Nagpur in Maharashtra ***PHOTO: PTI***

Floods hit several states

AGARTALA, 9 JULY

Severe rainfall has wreaked havoc across several Indian states, triggering flash floods, weather alerts, and the closure of educational institutions.

In South Tripura, over 100 families have been displaced after floodwaters inundated low-lying areas in Belonia and Santirbazar. The Muhuri River crossed the danger mark at 15.70 metres, forcing 289 residents into 10 relief camps. All schools and anganwadi centres were shut, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing an orange alert for continued heavy rain.

In Nagpur, Maharashtra, authorities declared a red alert following 172.2 mm of rainfall in nine hours. Several roads and highways are flooded, and all schools and colleges were closed on Wednesday. Similar alerts were issued for nearby districts, including Wardha and Amravati.

In Kashmir, while the showers brought relief from an intense heatwave, officials warned of potential flash floods, landslides, and waterlogging in vulnerable areas. The unsettled weather is forecast to continue until Thursday.

West Bengal also faces heavy downpours, with strong winds expected in several districts. A low-pressure system over Gangetic Bengal is likely to move towards Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Sriniketan recorded the state's highest rainfall at 95 mm, though Kolkata remained largely dry.

Seventeen river gauge stations in India are above warning levels, with four—on rivers like the Dhansiri and Wainganga—in severe flood condition. No sites have reached extreme flood levels. High inflows were reported at 34 reservoirs, including Srisailam, Almatti, and Hirakud, posing continued flood risk across ten states. Authorities remain on high alert across all affected regions. – *PTI*

2 dead after drinking spurious toddy in Hyd

HYDERABAD, 9 JULY

Two people died and as many as 28 people, including 12 women, were hospitalised here after allegedly consuming adulterated toddy.

Two people who were taken to the hospital on 8 July were declared brought dead. Three patients are critically ill. The affected people consumed toddy in different toddy shops on 6 July and 8 and were initially admitted to different hospitals on after complaining of acute gastroenteritis. Telangana Minister for Excise and Prohibition Jupally Krishna Rao on Wednesday visited NIMS Hospital and met the affected persons. A case has been registered and five persons were apprehended.The toddy shops where the people consumed toddy were sealed. – *PTI*

Porsche accused tempered with samples twice

PUNE, 9 JULY

The prosecution in the Pune Porsche crash case has told the court that an unsuccessful attempt was made to tamper with blood samples at a second hospital to shield the juvenile accused. Submitting further documents under Section 173(8) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, police said that after initially collecting the boy's blood at Sassoon Hospital—where it was allegedly swapped with his mother's—officers, suspecting foul play, had new samples taken at Aundh Government Hospital. However, the accused's parents and a middleman, Ashpak Makandar, learned of this and tried to influence Aundh doctors to switch samples again. The doctors refused.

The 17-year-old is accused of driving a Porsche while intoxicated, killing IT professionals Anish Awadhiya and Ashwini Costa on 19 May, 2024 in Pune's Kalyani Nagar. Nine people, including his father, middlemen and staff of the hospital were arrested by the police. —*PTI*

'COMMUNALLY PROVOCATIVE'

SC refuses to halt 'Udaipur Files' screening

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to urgently list a plea challenging screening of the movie 'Udaipur Files: Kanhaiya Lal tailor murder, and said "Let the film be released".

The bench made the remark after a counsel appearing for one of the accused in the murder case said that release of the film will prejudice the trial in the matter.

"Let the film be released... .,"the bench observed.

The petition was filed by Mohammed Javed, seeking a stay on the film's release till the trial is over.

The petitioner contended that the film's trailer and promotional materials were "communally provocative." Releasing the movie, portraying the accused as guilty and the story as conclusively true, can prejudice the ongoing proceedings.

Kanhaiya Lal, an Udaipur-based tailor in Rajasthan, was murdered in 2022, allegedly by Mohammad Riyaz and Mohammad Ghous.

The assailants had claimed the murder was in reaction to the tailor allegedly sharing a social media post supporting former BJP leader Nupur Sharma `after her controversial comments on Prophet Muhammad.

The trial is pending before the special NIA court in Jaipur.

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday directed the producer of the film to arrange its screening for those seeking a ban on it on Wednesday.

The Central Board of Film Certification and the makers of the movie claimed that objectionable portions were removed from the film.

The petitioners were asked to examine the censored version and return to court on Thursday. – *PTI*

ED summons lawyers: Suo motu begins

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

The Supreme Court has initiated a suo motu case over the issue of investigation agencies summoning lawyers, who offer opinions or represent parties in cases, and examine if they can be put on notice.

A bench led by CJI BR Gavai will hear the matter on 14 July.

The action comes after the Enforcement Directorate summoned a couple of senior lawyers. —*PTI*

ST panel denies info on Nicobar project

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) has refused to share information on the impact of a proposed mega infrastructure project on Great Nicobar Island, the southernmost part of Indian territory, on primitive tribal groups and the relocation of villages from tiger reserves, citing parliamentary privilege and other legal exemptions.

A PTI correspondent filed an RTI application on 3 April this year, requesting minutes of all commission meetings held since 1 January, 2022; all communications exchanged with the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs concerning the Great Nicobar Island Development Project and its impact on Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups like the Shompens and correspondences regarding the National Tiger Conservation Authority's directive to relocate villages from core areas of tiger reserves.

The National NCST disposed of the RTI application on 9 June, more than two months after receiving it, asking the applicant to visit its website for copies of all minutes of meetings. The commissionhas not uploaded the minutes of meetings held since April, 2021, on its website.. —*PTI*

Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla aboard the ISS as part of a commercial mission of Axiom Space ***PHOTO: PTI***

ASTRONAUT SHUKLA GROWS METHI, MOONG ABOARD ISS

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

In the final leg of his space mission, Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla embraced a rather down-to-earth role—documenting the sprouting of moong and methi seeds in petri dishes aboard the International Space Station (ISS). The experiment is part of a study on how microgravity affects germination and early plant development.

Shukla, along with fellow Axiom-4 astronauts, has spent 12 days on the ISS. Their return to Earth is expected any day after 10 July, depending on weather conditions off Florida's coast. NASA has not yet confirmed the undocking date, though the mission is expected to last up to 14 days.

The sprouts experiment is led by Ravikumar Hosamani from the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, and Sudheer Siddapureddy of IIT Dharwad. Once back on Earth, the seeds will be cultivated over several generations to study genetic and nutritional changes.

Shukla worked on experiments involving microalgae, stem cells, and astronaut cognition. He called the experience "fantastic." —*PTI*

A SOCIAL MENACE

Harassing juniors on WhatsApp is ragging: UGC

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

- The UGC receives dozens of complaints every year from freshers alleging harassment by seniors. Seniors form WhatsApp groups, contact juniors and subject them to mental harassment, amounting to ragging

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has directed higher education institutions to monitor any informal WhatsApp groups created to harass juniors, saying it will be treated as ragging and attract strict action under anti-ragging rules, according to officials.

The UGC receives dozens of complaints every year from freshers alleging harassment by seniors.

"In several cases, seniors form informal WhatsApp groups, contact juniors and subject them to mental harassment. This too amounts to ragging and will invite disciplinary measures," the UGC said in its latest directive.

"Student safety on campus is paramount and non-negotiable. Failure to enforce anti-ragging norms may lead to stringent action, including withholding of grants," it warned. The advisory also flagged incidents where juniors were threatened with social boycott for disobeying seniors. —*PTI*

Adultery suspicion not enough for child's DNA test: HC

MUMBAI, 9 JULY

The Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court has ruled that a husband's suspicion of his wife's adultery is not sufficient reason to compel their minor child to undergo a DNA test. Justice RM Joshi quashed a 2020 family court order that had directed the test, stating such measures are only warranted in exceptional circumstances.

The estranged couple married in 2011 and separated in early 2013, when the wife was three months pregnant. While the husband sought divorce citing adultery, he never denied being the child's father.

The court stressed the child's welfare must take precedence, noting it is obligatory for lower courts to weigh the minor's best interest. —*PTI*

Punjab cops foil terror plot of Pak terrorist

CHANDIGARH, 9 JULY

PHOTO: X/ Punjab Police

Punjab police on Wednesday said they have foiled a major terror plot orchestrated by Pakistan-based terrorist Harwinder Rinda and recovered a cache of arms from a forest area in Gurdaspur.

Preliminary investigation has found that the consignment was pushed into India by Pakistani agencies and Rinda as part of a premeditated plan to carry out attacks at multiple locations in Punjab, Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said.

"The Anti-Gangster Task Force, Punjab, successfully foiled a major terror plot orchestrated by Harwinder Rinda, a Babbar Khalsa International operative based in #Pakistan and backed by Pakistan's ISI," Yadav posted on X.

The DGP said acting swiftly on human intelligence, AGTF teams traced and recovered a large cache of terrorist hardware, including two AK-47 rifles with 16 live cartridges, two magazines, and two P-86 (high explosive) hand grenades from a forest area in Gurdaspur, before it could reach Harwinder Rinda's associates. —*PTI*

WASHED AWAY

A newly-built section of a National Highway 52 in Rajasthan's Jhunjhunu district collapsed after being battered by the swollen Katli River following heavy rainfall, triggering questions over construction quality and safety oversight. The recent downpour raised the river's water level dramatically. According to the Meteorological Department, the area recorded 86 mm of rainfall in a single day

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Trump's trade blitz brings forth lots of uncertainty

PHOTO: FREEPIK

President Donald Trump and his advisers promised a lightning round of global trade negotiations with dozens of countries back in April.

White House trade adviser Peter Navarro predicted "90 deals in 90 days." Administration officials declared that other countries were desperate to make concessions to avoid the massive import taxes – tariffs -- that Trump was threatening to plaster on their products starting 9 July.

But the 90 days have come and gone. And the tally of trade deals stands at two – one with the United Kingdom and one with Vietnam. Trump has also announced the framework for a deal with China, the details of which remain fuzzy.

Trump has now extended the deadline for negotiations to 1 August and tinkered with his threatened tariffs, leaving the global trading system pretty much where it stood three months ago — in a state of limbo as businesses delay decisions on investments, contracts and hiring because they don't know what the rules will be.

"It's a rerun, basically," said William Reinsch, a former US trade official who's now an adviser with the Centre for Strategic and International Studies think tank. Trump and his team "don't have the deals they want. So they're piling on the threats."

The pattern has repeated itself enough times to earn Trump the label TACO — an acronym coined by The Financial Times' Robert Armstrong that stands for "Trump Always Chickens Out."

The deal drought represents a collision with reality.

Negotiating simultaneously with every country on earth was always an impossible task, as Trump himself belatedly admitted last month in an interview with the Fox News Channel. And many trading partners — such as Japan and the European Union — were always likely to balk at Trump's demands, at least without getting something in return.

"It's really, really hard to negotiate trade agreements," which usually takes several months even when it involves just one country or a small regional group, said Chad Bown, an economic adviser in the Obama White House and now senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

The drama began 2 April– "Liberation Day," Trump called it — when the tariff-loving president announced a so-called baseline 10 per cent import tax on everybody and what he called "reciprocal" levies of up to 50 per cent on countries with which US runs trade deficits.

The 10 per cent baseline tariffs appear to be here to stay. Trump needs them to raise money to patch the hole his massive tax-cut bill is blasting into the federal budget deficit.

But the reciprocal tariffs are an even bigger deal.

In announcing them, Trump effectively blew up the rules governing world trade.

For decades, US and most other countries abided by tariff rates set through a series of complex negotiations known as the Uruguay round. Countries could set their own tariffs – but under the "most favoured nation" approach, they couldn't charge one country more than they charged another.

Now Trump is setting the tariff rates himself, creating "tailor-made trade plans for each and every country on this planet," in the words of White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt.

But investors have recoiled at the audacious plan, fearing that it will disrupt trade and damage the world economy.

Despite the Trump administration's expressions of confidence, the talks turned into a slog.

"Countries have their own politics, their own domestic politics," Reinsch said. "Trump structured this ideally so that all the concessions are made by the other guys and the only US concession is: We don't impose the tariffs."

But countries like South Korea and Japan needed "to come back with something," he said.

Frustrated by the lack of progress, Trump on Monday sent letters to Japan, South Korea and 12 other countries, saying he'd hit them with tariffs 1 August if they couldn't reach an agreement.

The levies were close to what he'd announced on 2 April; Japan's, for example, would be 25 per cent, compared to the 24 per cent unveiled 2 April.

Trump did sign an agreement last month with the United Kingdom that, among other provisions, reduced US tariffs on British automotive and aerospace products while opening the UK market for American beef and ethanol. But the pact kept the baseline tariff on British products mostly in place, underlining Trump's commitment to the 10 per cent tax despite the US running a trade surplus — not a deficit — with the UK for 19 straight years, according to the US Commerce Department.

On 2 July, the Vietnamese agreed to let US products into the country duty free while accepting a 20 per cent tax on their exports to US, Trump said, though details of the agreement have not been released.

The lopsided deal with Vietnam suggests that Trump can successfully use the tariff threat to bully concessions out of smaller economies.

But wrangling a deal with bigger trading partners is likely to remain tougher.

—PTI

SALAR ساڈا

Israel to relocate 2M Palestinians into Gaza strip

Israel's defence minister has outlined plans to pack hundreds of thousands of Palestinians into a closed zone of the Gaza Strip along the border with Egypt, according to local media reports.

It appears to be the latest version of plans by the Israeli government to maintain lasting control over the territory and relocate much of its population of some 2 million. Critics say that would amount to forcible displacement in violation of international law because Israel's offensive and blockade have made Gaza largely uninhabitable.

Israeli officials say the aim is to separate the civilian population from Hamas, which still controls parts of Gaza and holds dozens of hostages abducted in the 7 October attack that triggered the war 21 months ago. Palestinians would then be given the option of emigrating, they say.

US President Donald Trump, who has said he is narrowing in on a ceasefire and hopes to eventually end the war, has also voiced support for the mass transfer of Palestinians out of Gaza.

Defence Minister Israel Katz outlined the latest plans in a closed briefing with Israeli military reporters on Monday. His office did not respond to a request for comment on their reports, which appeared in several Israeli media outlets.

Katz reportedly said he had ordered Israel's military to draw up plans to build what he called a "humanitarian city" in Rafah, Gaza's southernmost city, which has been heavily damaged in the war and is now largely uninhabited.

Katz reportedly said that Palestinians would not be able to leave once they enter the zone.

The military would initially move 600,000 Palestinians from an existing so-called humanitarian zone along the coast, with the aim of eventually transferring the whole population to Rafah. Katz said Israel was searching for an unspecified international body to deliver aid as Israeli troops secured the perimeter.

He said the military could start building the city' during a 60-day ceasefire that Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are discussing in Washington this week.

Hamas has said it will only release the remaining hostages in exchange for a lasting ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli forces.

Both Trump and Netanyahu have said Gaza's population should be relocated to other countries through what they refer to as voluntary emigration.

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA/PTI

During their meeting on Monday at the White House, Netanyahu said Palestinians should have a "free choice" on whether to stay or leave.

Palestinians fear that even if they leave temporarily to escape the war, Israel will never allow them to return — a possible repeat of the mass exodus that occurred before and during the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation.

Katz expressed hope that the "emigration plan" would happen and said Netanyahu was already leading efforts to find countries willing to take in Palestinians, according to Israel's Haaretz newspaper.

Rights groups fear that concentrating the population along the border with Egypt would create catastrophic conditions that leave Palestinians no choice but to leave.

Tania Hary, executive director of Gisha, an Israeli group advocating Palestinians' right to freedom of movement.

Israel and the US have already rolled out an aid distribution programme in Rafah that has been marred by violence and controversy.

Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed or wounded while trying to reach sites run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, a contractor supported by Israel and the US, according to local hospitals.

Palestinian witnesses and health officials say Israeli forces have repeatedly opened fire toward crowds of people heading to the sites. The military says it has fired warning shots at people who approached its forces in what it describes as a suspicious manner.

GHF denies there has been any violence in or around the sites themselves, which are in Israeli military zones off limits to independent media. Two US contractors told The Associated Press that their colleagues used live ammunition and stun grenades as crowds scrambled for food, allegations denied by the foundation. GHF has also denied involvement in any population transfer plans.

But in a press conference in May, Netanyahu appeared to link the two initiatives, saying Israel would implement the new aid program and then create a "sterile zone" in southern Gaza, free of Hamas, where the Palestinian population would be relocated.

Netanyahu has said Israel will maintain lasting control over Gaza and has ruled out any role for the internationally-recognised Palestinian Authority, led by political rivals of Hamas. *—PTI*

LETTERS

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'Burning of fossil fuels amid heat waves caused 1,500 deaths'

Human-caused climate change is responsible for killing about 1,500 people in last week's European heat wave, a first-of-its-kind rapid study found.

Those 1,500 people "have only died because of climate change, so they would not have died if it had not been for our burning of oil, coal and gas in the last century," said study co-author Friederike Otto, a climate scientist at Imperial College in London.

Scientists at Imperial and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine used peer-reviewed techniques to calculate that about 2,300 people in 12 cities likely died from the heat in last week's bout of high temperatures, with nearly two-thirds of them dying because of the extra degrees that climate change added to the natural summer warmth.

Past rapid attribution studies have not gone beyond evaluating climate change's role in meteorological effects such as extra heat, flooding or drought. This study goes a step further in directly connecting coal, oil and natural gas use to people dying.

"Heat waves are silent killers, and their health impact is very hard to measure?" Said co-author Gary Konstantinoudis, a biostatistician at Imperial College. "People do not understand the actual mortality toll of heat waves, and this is because doctors, hospitals and governments do not report heat as an underlying cause of death", and instead attribute it to heart, lung or other organ problems.

PHOTOS: FREEPIK

Of the 1,500 deaths attributed to climate change, the study found more than 1,100 were people 75 or older.

Researchers looked at 23 June to 2 July in London, Paris, Frankfurt, Germany, Budapest, Hungary, Zagreb, Croatia; Athens, Greece; Barcelona, Spain; Madrid; Lisbon, Portugal; Rome; Milan and Sassari, Italy. They found that, except in Lisbon, the extra warmth from greenhouse gases added 2 to 4 degrees Celsius to what would have been a more natural heat wave. London got the most at nearly 4 degrees. Climate change only added about a degree to Lisbon's peak temperature, the study calculated, mostly because of the Atlantic Ocean's moderating effect, Otto said.

That extra climate-change-caused heat added the most extra deaths in Milan, Barcelona and Paris and the least in Sassari, Frankfurt and Lisbon, the study found. The 1,500 figure is the middle of the range of overall climate-related death estimates that go from about 1,250 to around 1,700.

Wednesday's study is not yet peer-reviewed. It is an extension of work done by an international team of scientists who do rapid attribution studies to search for global warming's fingerprints in the growing number of extreme weather events worldwide, and combine that with long-established epidemiological research that examines death trends that differ from what's considered normal.

Researchers compared what the thermometers read last week to what computer simulations say would have happened in a world without planet-warming greenhouse gases from fossil fuel use. Health researchers then compared estimates — there are no solid figures yet — for heat deaths in what just happened to what heat deaths would be expected for each city without those extra degrees of warmth.

There are long-established formulas that calculate excess deaths differing from normal based on location, demographics, temperatures and other factors, and those are used, Otto and Konstantinoudis said. And health researchers take into account many variables like smoking and chronic diseases, so it's comparing similar people except for temperature, so they know that's what's to blame, Konstantinoudis said.

Studies in 2021 generally linked excess heat deaths to human-caused climate change and carbon emissions, but not specific events like last week's hot spell. A 2023 study in Nature Medicine estimated that since 2015, for every degree Celsius the temperature rises in Europe, there's an extra 18,547 summer heat deaths.

Studies like Wednesday's are "ending the guessing game on the health harms from continued burning of fossil fuels," said Jonathan Patz, director of the Centre for Health, Energy and Environmental Research at the University of Wisconsin.

Courtney Howard, a Canadian emergency room Physician and Chairperson of the Global Climate and Health Alliance, said, "Studies like this help us see that reducing fossil fuel use is health care." *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Pakistani actress Humaira Asghar found dead in flat

LAHORE, 9 JULY

Pakistani actress and model Humaira Asghar Ali, 32, was found dead in her flat in Karachi's DHA Phase VI, with police estimating she died nearly two weeks earlier. Officers from Gizri Police Station discovered her decomposed body after forced entry, following court orders issued due to unpaid rent. No signs of forced entry were found; the flat was locked from inside. The body was sent to Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, where the cause of death was reserved pending a full forensic report. Born in Lahore, Humaira held degrees in Fine Arts and was known for roles in Jalaibee, Tamasha Ghar, and numerous TV serials and theatre productions. Police are tracing her family and contacts through mobile records. *—Agencies*

Pak man kills daughter over TikTok account

PESHAWAR, 9 JULY

A Pakistani man allegedly shot dead his daughter on Wednesday in the country's Punjab province after she refused to delete her TikTok account, according to the police. The incident took place in the Rawalpindi district's Dhok Choudrian Takht Pari area. The victim had reportedly been repeatedly asked by her father to remove her TikTok profile. When she refused, he allegedly opened fire, killing her on the spot, police said. According to an FIR registered in the case, the accused fled the scene after the shooting. A search operation has been launched to trace him. Police said the family initially tried to pass off the murder as a suicide, but evidence collected during the investigation pointed to homicide. *—PTI*

Pak army kills 8 militants at Afghan border

PESHAWAR, 9 JULY

Pakistani security forces shot dead eight militants attempting to infiltrate into the country's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province from Afghanistan's Kunar province, officials said on Wednesday. The exchange took place on Tuesday in Bajaur district after intelligence agencies received reports about a group of Fitna al-Khawarij militants – a term used for the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) – trying to cross the Pak-Afghan border. Troops responded swiftly, engaging the group and eliminating all eight militants, the officials said. A child was also injured in the crossfire. He was initially treated at Larkholozo Hospital and later shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital in Khar. *—PTI*

Pope celebrates first 'green' Mass with new prayers

ROME, 9 JULY

Pope Leo XIV celebrated what has been dubbed as the first "green" papal Mass, using a new set of prayers imploring care for God's creation in a sign he intends to emphasise environmental stewardship and climate justice for the world's most vulnerable people. The Mass, in the gardens of the Vatican's new ecological educational centre at the papal summer estate in Castel Gandolfo, indicated a strong line of ecological continuity with Pope Francis, who made environmental protection a hallmark of his pontificate. The Mass on Wednesday was celebrated for the Laudato Si centre, named for Francis' 2015 environmental encyclical in which the first pope from the Global South blasted the way wealthy countries and multinational corporations had exploited the Earth and its most vulnerable people. *—PTI*

Trump unleashes fresh tariffs on 6 more nations

Algeria, Iraq, and Libya face at least 30% new tariffs

WASHINGTON, 9 JULY

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday announced a new wave of reciprocal tariffs via Truth Social, targeting six countries with duties set to take effect from 1 August 2025. The latest round includes: 25 per cent tariffs on the Philippines, Brunei, and Moldova, and 30 per cent tariffs on Algeria, Iraq, and Libya.

This follows Monday's sweeping tariff imposition on 14 nations — Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, South Africa, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Tunisia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Cambodia. Tariff rates range from 25% to 40%, with Myanmar and Laos facing the highest penalties.

The move has sparked international backlash. Russia condemned the tariffs as a "gross violation" of World Trade Organization rules. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova accused Washington of using tariffs as political pressure, particularly against BRICS members. Trump warned that BRICS nations would face an additional 10% levy following their unified condemnation at the Brazil summit.

"Such unilateral actions undermine the entire architecture of international economic cooperation," Zakharova said, accusing the US of weaponising national security as a cover for protectionism.

In a surprising diplomatic gesture, Trump hosted a lunch with West African leaders from Liberia, Senegal, Gabon, Mauritania, and Guinea-Bissau. The meeting aligns with his administration's plan to dismantle USAID, pivoting towards partnerships with nations "willing to help themselves." However, health experts warn the change could lead to over 14 million additional global deaths by 2030.

Meanwhile, the European Union, also facing potential tariffs, is scrambling to finalise a deal with Washington while preparing retaliatory measures. With the 1 August deadline approaching, Trump's aggressive trade doctrine is further straining global markets and diplomatic relations. *— PTI*

ASEAN ministers meet as US tariffs loom

Launching the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Foreign Ministers' meeting, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said the world is now witnessing an era where "power unsettles principle" and "tools once used to generate growth are now wielded to pressure, isolate and contain."

SC allows Trump to downsize federal workforce

The Supreme Court on Tuesday cleared the way for President Donald Trump's plans to downsize the federal workforce despite warnings that critical government services will be lost and hundreds of thousands of federal employees will be out of their jobs.

People watch as smoke rise to the sky following an Israeli bombardment in the northern Gaza Strip on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

IDF KILLS 40 IN GAZA AS BIBI, TRUMP MEET FOR CEASEFIRE

DEIR AL-BALAH, 9 JULY

At least 40 Palestinians were killed in Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip, hospital officials said Wednesday, as international mediators raced to complete a ceasefire deal.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had a second meeting in two days with US President Donald Trump at the White House on Tuesday evening. Trump has been pushing for a ceasefire that might lead to an end to the 21-month war in Gaza. Israel and Hamas are considering a new US-backed ceasefire proposal that would pause the war, free Israeli hostages and send much-needed aid into Gaza.

Nasser Hospital in the southern city of Khan Younis said the dead included 17 women and 10 children. It said one strike killed 10 people from the same family, including three children.

Netanyahu told reporters in the Capitol on Tuesday that he and Trump see "eye to eye" on the need to destroy Hamas. He added that the cooperation and coordination between Israel and the US is currently the best it has ever been during Israel's 77-year-history. *—PTI*

France & UK will save Europe, says Macron

LONDON, 9 JULY

Britain's King Charles III and France's President Emmanuel Macron **PHOTO: PTI**

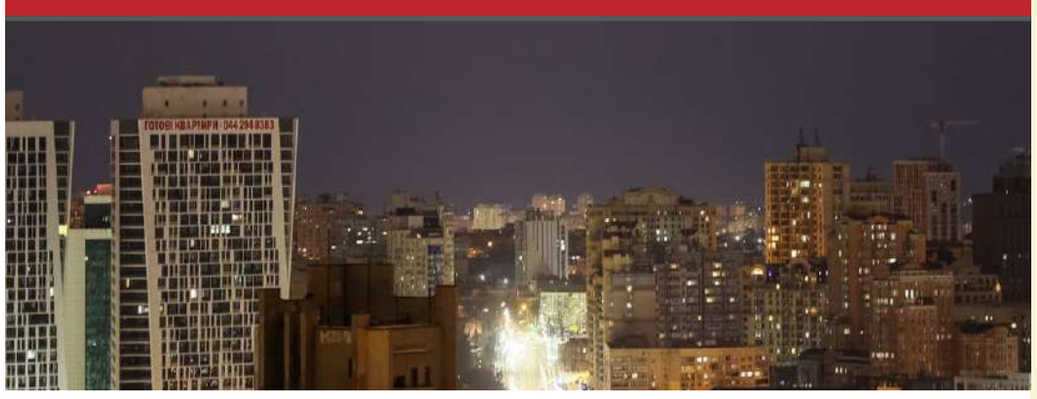
French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday urged Britain to stick close to its neighbours despite its exit from the European Union, saying that France and the UK will "save Europe" by standing for democracy, law and international order in a dangerous world.

On a state visit that mixed royal pageantry with tough political talks on Ukraine and migration, Macron said Europe must strengthen its economy and defenses and reduce its dependence "on both the US and China."

Macron's three-day trip, at the invitation of King Charles III, is the first state visit to the UK by a European Union head of state since Brexit, and a symbol of the UK government's desire to reset relations with the bloc after Britain acrimoniously left the EU in 2020.

Macron addressed members of both houses of Britain's Parliament. *—PTI*

Russia fires record 728 drones, 13 missiles at Ukraine



Russia's barrages comes a day after the US pledged more weapons to Ukraine **PHOTO: X @DEPINBHAT**

KYIV, 9 JULY

Russia fired a record 728 Shahed and decoy drones at Ukraine overnight, as well as 13 missiles, the Ukrainian air force said Wednesday, in the latest escalation amid mounting Russian aerial and ground attacks in the more than three-year war.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the city of Lutsk, which lies in Ukraine's northwest along the border with Poland and Belarus, was the hardest hit, though 10 other regions were also struck.

Ukraine's air defences shot down 296 drones and seven missiles overnight, while 415 more drones were lost from radars or jammed, an air force statement said.

Lutsk is home to airfields used by the Ukrainian army. Cargo planes and fighter jets routinely fly over the city. No casualties were immediately reported, as emergency crews continued to assess the damage.

US President Donald Trump said Tuesday that he's "not happy" with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who hasn't budged from his ceasefire and peace demands since Trump took office.

Trump said Monday that the US would have to send more weapons to Ukraine, just days after Washington paused critical weapons deliveries to Kyiv.

Trump's decision came after he privately expressed frustration with Pentagon officials for announcing a pause— a move that he felt wasn't properly coordinated with the White House, according to three sources. Asked Tuesday who approved the pause, Trump said, "I don't know. Why don't you tell me?" *—PTI*

Russian sabotage escalating in Europe: Intel

A British court found three men guilty of arson in the March 2024 plot that prosecutors said was masterminded by Russia's intelligence services – part of a campaign of disruption across Europe that Western officials blame on Moscow and its proxies. Two other men, including Earl, previously pleaded guilty to organising the arson. The fire is one of more than 70 incidents linked to Russia.

Russia guilty of downing MH17: European court

Europe's top human rights court delivered two rulings against Russia Wednesday. The first said Russia violated international law during the conflict in Ukraine, the first time an international court has held Moscow responsible. The court also ruled Russia was behind the downing of Flight MH17 in the 2014 tragedy that claimed nearly 300 lives, including 196 Dutch citizens.

China bans export to firms linked to Taiwan military

TAIPEI, 9 JULY

China imposed export controls on eight enterprises tied to Taiwan's military on Wednesday as the self-ruled island started annual military exercises.

China's Commerce Ministry added eight Taiwan-based organisations, including aerospace and shipbuilding companies, to an export control list, citing national and regional security concerns. The new rules, effective immediately, prohibit the export to the listed enterprises of "dual-use items," which can be used for both civilian and military purposes.

The ban comes as Taiwan begins its annual Han Guang military drills, which will simulate defences against a possible invasion by China. The drills are set to be the largest and longest so far, lasting about 10 days, twice as long as last year's exercises.

China claims Taiwan as its territory to be annexed by force if necessary, while the vast majority of Taiwanese wish to become fully independent or retain their current status of de-facto independence.

A spokesperson for Beijing's Taiwan Affairs Office said the export controls were necessary to defend China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Meanwhile, Taiwan's military drills follow the delivery of a range of new weaponry from tanks to unmanned waterborne drones, and come at a crucial time for Taiwan – amid an increase in regional tension in the country and harassment at the hands of China and People's Liberation Army (PLA). *—PTI*

Pak steps up efforts to sell cash-strapped PIA

ISLAMABAD, 9 JULY

Pakistan government is firming up efforts to sell Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) by the end of 2025, following a botched bid to sell the loss-making national flag-carrier last year, according to a media report on Wednesday.

The Privatisation Commission board on Tuesday declared four local parties, including three associated with the cement business, eligible for bidding for the acquisition of the airline, The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

The pre-qualified parties would now proceed to the buy-side due diligence phase – a critical step in the transparent and competitive privatisation process.

In its previous attempt, the government had set the minimum price at Rs 85.03 billion with a Rs 45 billion negative balance sheet; however, it only managed to secure an offer of Rs 10 billion.

PAK, TURKIYE TO DEEPEN TIES

Meanwhile, Pakistan and Turkiye ministers on Wednesday agreed to boost their cooperation in a range of sectors, including defence, trade, energy and infrastructure, aiming to enhance bilateral trade volume to USD 5 billion. *—PTI*

DOZENS KILLED IN CALAMITIES

Quakes, floods, wildfires shake the globe

GUATEMALA CITY/ SANTA FE/ HUNT JUL/ KATHMANDU/ MARSEILLE, 9 JULY

Flash floods, wildfires and earthquakes wreaked havoc across the globe, killing dozens, injuring hundreds and leaving thousands at its mercy.

GUATEMALA

Two people died when huge rocks fell on their vehicle in Guatemala, after dozens of earthquakes were recorded in a matter of hours. More than 37 earthquakes and aftershocks with magnitudes ranging from 3.0 to 5.6 were reported in Guatemala Tuesday afternoon.

At least five people were buried by landslides and two of them had already been rescued, Guatemalan President Bernardo Arevalo said.

NEW MEXICO

Three people died in a village in southern New Mexico that is a popular summer retreat after monsoon rains triggered flash flooding that was so intense an entire house was swept downstream, officials said. A man and two children were swept away Tuesday by floodwaters, the village of Ruidoso said in a statement.

TEXAS

Texas Governor Greg Abbott says at least 161 people are missing days after flash floods that killed more than 100 people across central Texas.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

NEPAL/CHINA

At least nine people were killed and 20 others were missing after monsoon rains flooded a river in Nepal's Rasuwa district, sweeping away the "Friendship Bridge" that links the country to China. The continuous monsoon rainfall in China on Monday night triggered a flood in the Bhotekoshi River in Nepal. The flooded river carried away at least nine people. Their bodies were recovered downstream, miles away from Dhading and Chitwan districts.

MARSIELLE, FRANCE

A wildfire that reached France's second-largest city and left 110 injured was pushed back overnight but was not yet extinguished Wednesday, authorities said. Marseille's Mayor lifted a confinement order for tens of thousands of people. The mayor said 110 people were treated for smoke inhalation and related injuries. All flights to and from Marseille were grounded. *—Agencies*

Turkey bans X's AI Chatbot Grok for offensive content

ANKARA, 9 JULY

PHOTO: X

Grok

A Turkish court ordered Wednesday a ban on access to Elon Musk's artificial intelligence chatbot Grok from Turkey, after the platform allegedly disseminated content insulting to Turkey's President and others.

The chatbot posted vulgarities against Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, his late mother and personalities, while responding to users' questions on the X social media platform, pro-government A Haber news channel reported. Offensive responses were also directed toward modern Turkey's founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, other media outlets said.

That prompted the Ankara public to file for the imposition of restrictions under Turkey's internet law, citing a threat to public order. A criminal court approved the request early on Wednesday, ordering the country's telecommunications authority to enforce the ban.

The incident is part of a broader controversy surrounding a recent update to Grok, which resulted in more "politically incorrect" and unfiltered responses.

In response to mounting controversy, X said it was aware of the recent posts and had taken immediate action to remove inappropriate content. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Gold declines by ₹700 to ₹98,420/10g

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

Gold prices declined by Rs 700 to Rs 98,420 per 10g in the national capital on Wednesday in line with weak global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Gold of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 99,120 per 10g in the previous market session. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity depreciated by Rs 600 to Rs 98,000 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). It had settled at Rs 98,600 per 10g on Tuesday. Additionally, silver ended at Rs 1,04,800 per kg in the previous market close. On the global front, spot gold went lower by USD 11.66 or 0.35 per cent to USD 3,289.81 per ounce. *—PTI*

Rupee rises by 6P, settles at 85.67 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 9 JULY

The rupee appreciated by 6 paise to close at 85.67 against the US dollar on Wednesday, supported by optimism over a potential trade deal with the US and a delay in reciprocal tariffs. The currency had opened weaker at 85.84 but recovered during the day, trading between 85.93 and 85.65. A strong US dollar and crude oil prices hovering around USD 70 per barrel capped further gains. On Tuesday, the rupee had strengthened by 21 paise to 85.73. Analysts expect the rupee to move within the 85.30–86.20 range. Meanwhile, Brent crude rose to USD 70.38, and the dollar index edged up to 97.02. The Sensex fell by 176.43 points, and foreign investors sold equities worth Rs 26.12 crore. *—PTI*

Telecom Egypt, KareXpert plan healthcare portal

GURUGRAM, 9 JULY

Telecom Egypt on Wednesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Reliance Jio-backed KareXpert, a leading healthcare technology company, to launch a comprehensive digital healthcare platform managed through a secure national cloud hosted within Egypt. "We started by building a fibre-optic network that spans the entire country, then strengthened it with 5G services to ensure highly reliable connectivity," said Mohamed Nasr, Managing Director and CEO of Telecom Egypt. According to the press release, the platform combines a Hospital Information Management System (HIMS) with unified electronic medical records and provides comprehensive revenue cycle management solutions, which will assist hospitals in a unified view of their clinical and administrative data, enhancing operational efficiency in line with the best global practices. *—ANI*

TTL partners with Emerson for services to OEMs

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

Global product engineering and digital services firm Tata Technologies Ltd (TTL) on Wednesday said it has partnered with Emerson for integrated testing and validation solutions for global original equipment manufacturer (OEM) in the automotive, aerospace and commercial vehicle sectors. The partnership with Emerson, an industrial technology leader of advanced automation solutions, aims to empower manufacturers to tackle the complexities of next-generation mobility, a TTL statement said. It will combine the TTL's expertise in engineering and mobility platform development with Emerson's industry-leading, software-connected test and measurement solutions, it said. The partnership will seek to innovate intelligent, automated testing and validation solutions, TTL President Nachiket Paranjpe said. *—PTI*

'Vedanta financial zombie, runs like Ponzi'

US short seller Viceroy says financial strategy pushed the group to 'the brink of insolvency'

LONDON, 9 JULY

US short seller Viceroy Research launched a scathing report on Vedanta Resources Ltd (VRL), labelling it a "financial zombie" kept afloat by siphoning cash from its profitable subsidiary, Vedanta Ltd (VEDL). The report alleges VRL is "systematically draining" VEDL to service its debt, pushing the operating firm into deeper leverage and eroding its cash reserves.

"This looting erodes the fundamental value of VEDL, which is the primary collateral for VRL's creditors," said the report. It further accuses VRL of using a "Bait and Switch Funding Model" where VEDL announces capital-intensive projects it cannot afford, raises fresh capital, and redirects it to VRL to meet debt obligations.

The report compares Vedanta's financial strategy to a Ponzi scheme, stating it has pushed the group to "the brink of insolvency," propped up only by a cycle of new debt and deferred liabilities.

Vedanta called Viceroy's report a malicious combination of selective misinformation and baseless allegations *PHOTO: PTI*

Viceroy claimed this practice, along with mounting interest expenses, inflated asset values, capitalised expenses to artificially boost profits, and undisclosed off-balance-sheet items, may "tantamount to fraud". It also pointed to systematic governance failures, including "inappropriate auditor choices".

It claims that upcoming demergers proposed by VRL to boost value fail to address the core cash crunch, and will instead saddle the new entities with unsustainable debts.

- Viceroy claimed surviving on new debt and deferred liabilities, along with mounting interest expenses, inflated asset values and capitalised expenses to artificially boost profits may 'tantamount to fraud'

In a strongly-worded rebuttal, Vedanta called the report a "malicious combination of selective misinformation and baseless allegations". It accused Viceroy of deliberately ignoring factual context and not contacting the group prior to publication. "The timing is suspect and appears aimed at undermining forthcoming corporate initiatives," Vedanta added, referencing the report's release a day before Chairman Anil Agarwal's address at the company's annual general meeting.

Vedanta maintained that the report "only compiles already public information" and said it remains committed to business growth, urging stakeholders to "avoid speculation and unsubstantiated allegations".

Viceroy, meanwhile, doubled down, stating Vedanta had failed to refute any claims from its "85-page, thoroughly referenced" report. "This is likely because they cannot refute our findings," Viceroy wrote on social media, calling Vedanta's legal-disclaimer-based response "the laziest" they'd encountered in over eight years.

The move by Viceroy mirrors that of Hindenburg Research's 2023 report on the Adani Group, which triggered a USD 150 billion market rout. Vedanta, however, insists its stakeholders are "discerning enough" to see through such "false propaganda". *— PTI*

Vedanta shares plunge by 8%

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

Shares of Vedanta Ltd tumbled nearly 8 per cent on Wednesday after Viceroy Research released a report charging billionaire Anil Agarwal's mining conglomerate to be "financially unsustainable" and posing a severe risk to creditors. The stock tanked 7.71 per cent to Rs 421 on the BSE. At the NSE, it dropped to Rs 420.65, but later recovered to trade at Rs 441.10 on the BSE. *—PTI*

MUMBAI, 9 JULY

Stock markets closed lower on Wednesday due to selling in IT and oil & gas shares as investors turned cautious ahead of the start of earnings season and mixed global trends.

Dragged by late selling, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell by 176.43 points or 0.21 per cent to settle at 83,536.08. During the day, it lost 330.23 points or 0.39 per cent to 83,382.28. The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 46.40 points or 0.18 per cent to end at 25,476.10.

From the Sensex firms, HCL Tech, Tata Steel, Tech Mahindra, Reliance Industries, Bharat Electronics and ICICI Bank were among the laggards. Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever, UltraTech Cement and Power Grid were among the gainers.

Meanwhile, shares of student recruitment solutions provider Crizac Ltd on Wednesday ended with a premium of nearly 26 per cent against the issue price of Rs 245. On the BSE, shares of the firm ended at Rs 307.45 apiece, up 25.48 per cent. On the NSE, it ended at Rs 307.63, surging 25.56 per cent.

Additionally, the net inflow into equity mutual funds surged 24 per cent to Rs 23,587 crore in June, reversing the declining trend of the last five months, driven by strong equity market performance across segments, data released by the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) showed on Wednesday. Also, the latest fund infusion by investors marks the 52nd consecutive month of net inflows into the segment. *—PTI*

Adani's ₹1K crore bonds fully subscribed in 3hrs

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

Adani Enterprises Ltd's Rs 1,000 crore non-convertible debenture (NCD) issue was fully subscribed within three hours of opening on Wednesday, according to stock exchange data.

The secured, listed NCDs offer interest rates of up to 9.3 per cent per annum and were open to non-institutional investors on a first-come, first-served basis. The issue received bids exceeding Rs 1,400 crore by 3.30pm, driven by strong interest from retail investors, high-net-worth individuals, and corporates.

This marks the second public NCD issue by the Adani Group's flagship firm, following a Rs 800 crore issuance in September 2023, which saw 90 per cent subscription on the first day.

The current issue has a base size of Rs 500 crore with a green-shoe option to retain oversubscription up to an additional Rs 500 crore. NCDs are offered in tenures of 24, 36, and 60 months, with options for quarterly, annual, or cumulative interest payouts.

At least 75 per cent of the proceeds will go towards repaying existing debt, with the remainder allocated for corporate purposes. *—PTI*

$12B FRAUD CASE

US bankruptcy court finds Byju guilty of contempt

BENGALURU, 9 JULY

Byju Raveendran, co-founder of ed-tech firm BYJU's, was found guilty of contempt by a US Bankruptcy Court in Delaware on 7 July and fined USD 10,000 per day starting from 1 July. The ruling stems from his repeated failure to submit documents and appear for hearings related to a USD 1.2 billion loan fraud involving BYJU's Alpha Inc, a US-based financing arm.

Raveendran argued the court had no personal jurisdiction over him, claiming he held no formal position at Alpha. However, lenders produced documents showing he had signed key agreements as "CEO" of Alpha, including one transferring USD 533 million to Inspilearn LLC, a Delaware entity linked to BYJU's parent company, Think & Learn. That amount was later moved to an undisclosed offshore trust.

The court had already imposed identical sanctions on Raveendran's brother, Riju, who was Alpha's sole officer. Both brothers were also named in a separate USD 2.5 million breach-of-contract case, after failing to appear before a Connecticut court.

Alpha originally secured a USD 1.2 billion loan in 2021 from a group of 37 lenders to fund BYJU's international expansion. In 2022, over USD 500 million was quietly transferred to Camshaft Capital, a questionable hedge fund with ties to a London firm OCI Ltd, which used the funds for ads and sponsorships, including the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

In February 2025, the court found Think & Learn, Camshaft, and Riju Raveendran guilty of fraudulent transfer and breach of fiduciary duty. Byju now faces direct legal consequences in the US for the first time. *— Agencies*

Reliance Jio shelves 2025 IPO plans

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio Platforms will not to launch its IPO this year as planned, sources said on condition of anonymity on Wednesday.

The company wants to increase its valuation further by boosting revenues and expanding the subscriber base of its telecom and other digital offerings before it goes for an IPO, one of the sources said.

"Jio (IPO) is not going to happen this year, it's just not possible. The company wants the business to be more mature," said the source.

SMARTWORKS OPENS IPO

Smartworks Coworking Spaces will hit the capital market on 10 July to launch its Initial Public Offer (IPO) for raising nearly Rs 600 crore as the company intends to expand its business and reduce debt. The company has fixed a price band of Rs 387–407 per share for its IPO,

- The company wants to first increase its valuation further by boosting revenues and expanding the subscriber base of its telecom and other digital offerings

which will close on 14 July.

ANTHEM IPO ON 11 JULY

Anthem Biosciences on Wednesday fixed a price band of Rs 540-570 per share for its Rs 3,395-crore initial public offering (IPO). At the upper end of the price band, the company's valuation exceeds Rs 31,800 crore. The initial share-sale will be open for public subscription during 14–16 July. *—PTI*

Settlement plan for brokers from Aug, says Sebi

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

Markets regulator Sebi on Wednesday said a settlement scheme for stock brokers, who traded on the now-defunct National Spot Exchange Ltd (NSEL) platform, will open on 25 August. The scheme would conclude on 25 February, 2026, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a statement.

The scheme aims to provide a settlement opportunity to stock brokers against whom Sebi has already passed orders for trading or facilitating trading on the NSEL platform and are currently pending before any authority or forum like the Adjudicating Officer, Securities Appellate Tribunal, or the courts.

By opting for the scheme, these brokers will have an opportunity to resolve pending proceedings and bring them to an expedited conclusion. However, Sebi has specified that the scheme excludes brokers – specifically, those named in chargesheets filed by the Economic Offences Wing or the ED. *—PTI*

India needs domestic fix for EV magnet crisis: Report

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

India's ambition to become a global electric vehicle (EV) hub faces a major setback due to China tightening export rules on rare earth minerals. A report by consultancy firm Primus Partners warns that magnet shipments to India are already being delayed, revealing the fragility of India's EV supply chain.

Despite holding the world's fifth-largest rare earth reserves, India lacks the infrastructure for oxide separation, metal refining, and magnet production – areas dominated by China. The report says "India's EV surge needs a home-grown magnet fix."

To address this, three urgent steps are recommended: scale domestic magnet production to 4,000 tonnes annually by 2030 through fast-track clearances and financial support; secure long-term supply agreements with countries like Australia, the US, and select African nations; and boost recycling by enforcing an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework and supporting advanced recycling technologies.

India's rare-earth magnet demand is projected to rise from 1,700 tonnes in 2022 to 15,400 tonnes by 2032. Without building a self-reliant supply chain, experts warn, the country risks stalling its EV growth and losing strategic independence. *—ANI*

JOINS INDIAN C-SUITE EXECUTIVES

Sabih Khan elevated as Apple's COO

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

Moradabad-born Sabih Khan has joined an elite league of India-born C-suite executives at global giants after being elevated to the position of Chief Operating Officer (COO) of iPhone maker Apple, following the path laid by the likes of Indra Nooyi, Satya Nadella and Sundar Pichai.

Khan, who will still have Apple CEO Tim Cook as his leader, will take over his new role from Jeff Williams later this month, rising through the ranks after being at Apple for 30 years and joining the executive team as Senior VP of operations in 2019.

Satya Nadella is the Chairman and CEO of Microsoft, while Sundar Pichai is the CEO of both Google and its holding company Alphabet.

Indra Nooyi who stepped down as CEO of foods and beverages major PepsiCo in 2018 after leading the company for 12 years and serving it in various roles for 24 years and Harish Manwani who became the first Chief Operating Officer of FMCG major Unilever in 2011 after joining the company's Indian arm, HUL as management trainee in 1976, paved the way for India-born executives to head global companies. Khan, before joining Apple in 1995, worked as an applications development engineer and key account technical leader at GE Plastics.

- Khan, who will still have Apple CEO Tim Cook as his leader, will take over his new role from Jeff Williams later this month, rising through the ranks after being at Apple for 30 years

Born in 1966 in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, Khan moved to Singapore during his school years before settling in the US. Over the past six years, he has led Apple's global supply chain, overseeing planning, procurement, manufacturing, logistics, and product fulfilment. He has also overseen Apple's supplier responsibility programmes that focus on worker protection, education and environmental sustainability. *—PTI*

50% US copper tariffs not to hit Indian firms

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

The proposed 50 per cent import tariff on copper announced by US President Donald Trump will not have any impact on Indian companies as the country is copper-deficient, according to an industry official. Also, Coal and Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy on Wednesday said India will discuss the impact of US tariffs on copper.

International Copper Association India Managing Director Mayur Karmarkar said, "India is a copper-deficient country, and its export, as such, is not significant. Again, of the total exports, the shipments to the US are just around 10,000 tonnes."

The proposed duty, as a result, will not have any impact on the Indian firms, particularly as the domestic demand is extremely buoyant,

given India's thrust on renewable energy, EVs, and a host of other copper-intensive sectors, Karmarkar said.

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday announced 50 per cent tariffs on copper, after having implemented similar duties on steel and aluminium.

A vision document released by G Kishan Reddy on Friday forecast a sixfold increase in copper demand by 2047. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X/@PHIL SALT

Salt's bat used in IPL cleared by authorities

LONDON, 9 JULY

England white-ball opener Phil Salt's bat, which he used in the last two years, including in the Indian Premier League, was initially deemed "to have failed an on-field gauge test" but later cleared after further examination, his club said on Wednesday. The 28-year-old Salt currently plays for Lancashire. He played a major role in Royal Challenger Bengaluru's maiden IPL title win earlier in the year, scoring 403 runs from 13 matches, the second highest for his team after Virat Kohli (657 from 15 matches). Lancashire Cricket, in a statement, said that the bat used by Salt during Friday's Vitality Blast T20 match against Northants Steelbacks has been cleared by the Cricket Regulator's Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU). Salt was alleged to have breached ECB Directives 3.2 and 3.3 after his bat failed an on-field bat-gauge test during the Vitality Blast fixture.—*PTI*

Bumrah's return, Jofra's comeback

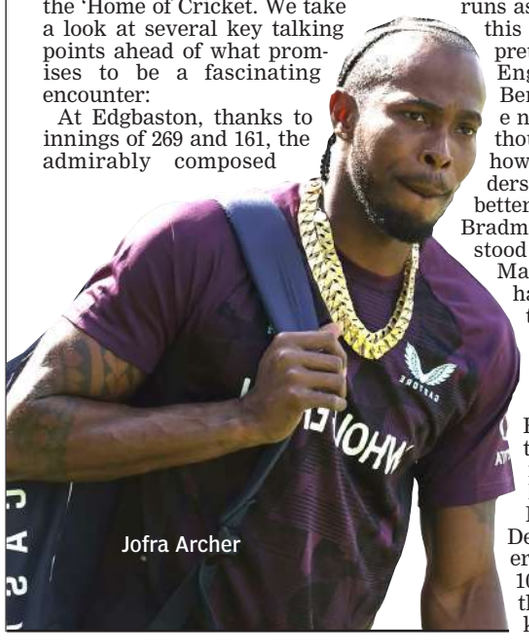
Tougher batting test awaits in-form India against unsettled England in 3rd Test

LONDON, 9 JULY

An in-form India will continue their quest for just a fourth series win in England when the third Test at Lord's starts on Thursday. India levelled this five-match campaign at 1-1 with a 336-run rout of England in last week's second Test at Edgbaston. It leaves the series beautifully poised ahead of what should prove to be a fascinating encounter at the 'Home of Cricket. We take a look at several key talking points ahead of what promises to be a fascinating encounter:

At Edgbaston, thanks to innings of 269 and 161, the admirably composed and elegant Gill became the first batsman in Test cricket to make scores of 250 and 150 in the same match. So prolific has Gill been, he could now threaten Australia great Donald Bradman's record of 974 runs in a single Test series, after the 25-year-old also made 147 in India's five-wicket defeat in the opener at Headingley.

"You've got to give your opposition credit when it's due, and for him to bang out as many runs as he has done in this game has been pretty special," said England captain Ben Stokes. One encouraging thought for Stokes, however, as he ponders how to get the better of Gill, is that Bradman's mark has stood for 95 years. Many batsmen have made blistering starts, only for the runs to dry up later on.



Jofra Archer

Jasprit Bumrah returns to the XI after a rest, replacing Prasidh Krishna. Akash Deep, who delivered a memorable 10-wicket haul in the second Test, keeps his place. Mohammed Siraj completes the pace trio.

INDIA VS ENGLAND

INDIA vs ENG Match starts at 3.30 pm IST

HEAD TO HEAD AT LORD'S	
PLAYED:	19
ENG Won:	12
INDIA Won:	3
DRAWN:	4

Can Archer revive England's flagging attack?

It has been over four years since fast bowler Jofra Archer last played a Test, but the injury-blighted express quick now appears set to return at Lord's, where in 2019 he marked his debut by felling Australia's Steve Smith with a fearsome bouncer."He's been through his injuries and his time out of Test cricket, but we all know what he's capable of achieving and we hope that when the opportunity does arrive for him, he's able to recapture and improve on what he's been able to do already."Archer at his best would certainly give England a much-needed cutting edge. Chris Woakes has taken just three wickets at a hugely expensive average of nearly 97 apiece so far this series, despite being given the new ball.

Gill storms into top 10

India captain Shubman Gill on Wednesday broke into the top-10 of the ICC men's Test batting rankings for the first time in his career after a record-breaking performance against England at Edgbaston. Gill smashed 269 and 161 in the game becoming only the second player in history to score more than 150 in both innings

Gill has shown he can fill the boots: Ramprakash

Former England player Mark Ramprakash has hailed Shubman Gill for his stamina, skill and hunger, saying the young India batter and captain has shown he is capable of filling the boots of the 'Fab Four' of world cricket, whose era is nearing an end. Gill scored 269 and 161 in the two innings of the Birmingham Test, adding to his 147 and 8 in the series opener at Leeds. He has totalled 585 runs in two Tests of the five-match series. —*PTI*

Indian cricket player Jasprit Bumrah

PHOTO: PTI

Meghalaya CM unveils 134th Indian Oil Durand Cup

SHILLONG, 9 JULY

Meghalaya Chief Minister Shri Conrad K Sangma on Wednesday unveiled the trophy of the 134th Indian Oil Durand Cup 2025 at a ceremony held at the State Convention Centre here, marking the official start of the tournament's trophy roadshow in the state. The unveiling sets the stage for one of the world's oldest and most prestigious football tournaments and reinforces Meghalaya's growing stature as a hub for sports-led youth development. The trophy roadshow will cover Shillong, Nongstoin, and Tura, allowing the citizens a rare chance to witness the historic trophies up close before the tournament begins.—*PTI*

Kohli breaks silence on Test retirement for the first Time

LONDON, 9 JULY

Virat Kohli laughed at his own expense while talking about his Test retirement at Yuvraj Singh's fundraiser in London.

Kohli, who now resides in the British capital, made a quick dash to the YouWeCan cancer fundraiser after being spotted at Wimbledon, where he looked suave and stylish in a brown suit.With the Indian team also in the house, the event presenter made a reference to Kohli not being part of the squad, having announced his retirement ahead of the England tour."We miss you on the field, man," said presenter Gaurav Kapur. With Ravi Shastri, Chris Gayle, Kevin Pietersen, and Yuvraj himself standing next to Kohli, the Indian superstar paused before responding: "I just coloured my beard two days ago. You know it's time when you are colouring your beard every four days, it's time to relax ."Kohli came in the middle of the fundraiser and was the showstopper. He also spoke about his bond with Shastri, who was the head coach when Kohli took the Test team to new heights."Honestly, if I weren't working with him... what happened in Test cricket wouldn't have been possible. The clarity that we had together is very hard to find. It's everything for cricketers to grow in their careers. "Even he hadn't backed me the way he did... those press conferences where he took the bullets from the front line. Things would have been different, and I always have respect and regard for him, for being a massive part of my cricketing journey," said Kohli. Shastri returned the compliment, calling Kohli the most influential cricketer of the last 15 years. —*PTI*

Bencic through to her first semis after defeating Andreeva

LONDON, 9 JULY

Switzerland's Belinda Bencic won two tiebreaks to beat Russian seventh seed Mirra Andreeva 7-6(3), 7-6(2) on Wednesday and reach the Wimbledon semifinal for the first time. The only mother left in the singles draw smashed her first of four match points to win the second tie-break of the contest and become her country's first women's semifinalist since Martina Hingis in 1998.

Sinner eases past Shelton to

Jannik Sinner

Wimbledon SFs

Jannik Sinner shook off prematch injury fears to deliver a statement quarter-final victory against Ben Shelton on Wednesday afternoon at Wimbledon.

The No. 1 player in the PIF ATP Rankings produced a trademark rock-solid display to down Shelton 7-6(2), 6-4, 6-4 and reach the last four at the grass major for the second time. Sinner, who sustained an elbow injury and fell to a two-set deficit before Grigor Dimitrov retired from the pair's fourth-round clash, quickly eased any fears of serious damage to his arm by nullifying Shelton's power across two hours and 19 minutes on No. 1 Court.

Iga Swiatek reaches her first semifinal

Polish tennis player and eighth seed Iga Swiatek marched into the semi-final of the ongoing Wimbledon 2025, after beating Liudmila Samsonova in the quarter-final clash at Court 1, on Wednesday. Iga Swiatek reached another milestone in her career, as she confirmed her semi-final spot at Wimbledon for the first time.

The Polish superstar dominated the 19th-seed Liudmila Samsonova from the very first game and didn't give her a chance for a comeback.

In the one-hour and 49-minute match, Iga Swiatek demolished Liudmila Samsonova and clinched a 6-2, 7-5 triumph in straight sets. Swiatek displayed a stunning performance in the match, keeping three aces and 42 service points. —*PTI*

FABIO FOGNINI ANNOUNCES HIS RETIREMENT

LONDON, 9 JULY

Former top-10 player Fabio Fognini announced his retirement from professional tennis on Wednesday at Wimbledon, where he lost to Carlos Alcaraz in a five-setter on Day 1 of the tournament last week. The 38-year-old Italian pushed two-time defending champion Alcaraz for more than 4 1/2 hours before coming out on the wrong end of the 7-5, 6-7 (5), 7-5, 2-6, 6-1 score in the fortnight's first match at Centre Court.

That extended Fognini's losing streak to 10 consecutive tour-level matches, including a 0-7 record in 2025. —*PTI*

India begins Europe tour with a 6-1 victory

EINDHOVEN, 9 JULY

The Indian men's hockey team produced a dominant performance to outclass Ireland 6-1, making a rollicking start to its European tour at the Hockey Club Oranje-Rood here. Uttam Singh, Amandeep Lakra, Aditya Lalage, Selvam Karthi, and Boby Singh Dhami were the scorers for India in a comprehensive victory Tuesday night. India completely dominated throughout the four quarters and hardly put a foot wrong. Uttam opened the scoring, and Amandeep later extended the Indian team's lead.—*PTI*

SA20'S FOURTH SEASON TO START FROM 26 DECEMBER

JOHANNESBURG, 9 JULY

The fourth season of the SA20 league will begin with a Boxing Day opener between defending champions MI Cape Town and Durban's Super Giants at Newlands on 26 December, with the final scheduled for January 25, the event's organisers said on Wednesday.

The following day, 27 December, will mark the season's first double-header with Centurion hosting a special derby between Pretoria Capitals and Joburg Super Kings while Paarl Royals and Sunrisers Eastern Cape clash at Boland Park in Paarl. Kingsmead, the home of Durban's Super Giants, will be buzzing with activity in the week leading up to the New Year, with the east coast venue welcoming both MI Cape Town (28 December) and Joburg Super Kings (30 December) within the space of a couple of days."Fans will have the opportunity to toast in the New Year in style with another cracking double-header set for Gqeberha and Cape Town on 31 December," the organisers said.

Two-time champions Sunrisers Eastern Cape will welcome the Paarl Royals at St. George's Park, with MI Cape Town and Pretoria Capitals clashing at Newlands later in the day. —*PTI*

Red Bull fires F1 team principal Horner

MILTON KEYNES, 9 JULY

Longtime Red Bull team principal Christian Horner was fired abruptly on Wednesday after a 20-year stint that included eight Formula 1 drivers' titles and a rise to celebrity status.

Red Bull did not give a reason for the decision in a statement Wednesday, but thanked Horner for his work and said he will "forever remain an important part of our team history."Laurent Mekies of sister team Racing Bulls will replace Horner in his role as chief executive of the Red Bull team. Horner had been Red Bull team principal since it entered F1 as a full constructor in 2005. He had performed his team and media duties as normal throughout the British Grand Prix last week.

His wife is Geri Halliwell, Ginger Spice of the Spice Girls, and Horner himself became a celebrity figure through his prominence on Netflix's F1 docuseries "Drive To Survive," —*PTI*

SHOT PUTTER KAUR PROVISIONALLY SUSPENDED BY NADA

MUMBAI, 9 JULY

Punjab shot putter Jasmine Kaur, on Wednesday, was provisionally suspended by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for failing a dope test.

Jasmine tested positive for Terbutaline, a stimulant commonly found in cough syrups.

The 22-year-old had won the gold medal at the National Games in Dehradun earlier this year with a best throw of 15.97m. She had also finished second at the Inter-University Games last year with a best of 14.75m. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@PKL

Pro Kabaddi League 2025 to begin on 29 August

MUMBAI, 9 JULY

The 12th edition of the Pro Kabaddi League will commence on August 29, the organisers announced on Wednesday. The new season will see the reigning champions, Haryana Steelers, return to defend their maiden title win from last year. "With all 12 franchises strengthening their squads through the recently concluded auction, the upcoming season promises to deliver unprecedented levels of competition and entertainment," the organisers said.—*PTI*

YOUNG PLAYERS NEED TO WORK

We need better time, game management: Harendra

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

Under-fire Indian women's hockey team chief coach Harendra Singh on Wednesday said his side needs to work on time and game management to be a force to reckon with, areas that spoiled their FIH Pro League campaign this year.

India lost seven matches out of eight in the European leg of the Pro League to finish at the bottom and were relegated to the FIH Nations' Cup. In the remaining match, India drew 2-2 with Argentina in the regulation time but lost in the penalty shootout.

"It's a new team with several experienced players missing due to injuries, defence in particular. What we need to work on is time management and game management," Harendra said in a virtual interaction.

"To work on that area, we need to create scenarios and play the game. Like fielding inexperienced players in the defence and then observing where they stand. If they fail, we will have to depend on seniors," he said.

"There is no excuse on that part."

Harendra said the Indians also need to work on their penalty corner defending.

"PC (penalty corner) defending is an area which we need to work on more. We didn't have experienced players like Udita and Nikki Pradhan in defence in the European leg. We need to work on our defence." —*PTI*

India women's hockey team PHOTO: PTI

India's Priyanka shows Zsoka Gaal exit door

BATUMI, 9 JULY

Woman International Master K Priyanka caused a major upset in the first-round tiebreaker as she breached the defences of higher-ranked Zsoka Gaal of Hungary in the blitz games in the first round of the FIDE World Women's Chess Cup here.

The journey from here will get tougher for Priyanka, but she has proved that the exploits of the male counterparts, who are having great outings against the best, are inspiring the young women players in the country. Having lost the first game under Classical time control, Priyanka fought back bravely to crush Gaal and force her into the tie-breaker. The Indian then lost one and won in the rapid tiebreak games.

Thereafter, a couple of blitz games followed where the Indian was unstoppable as she won two games in a row to reach the round of 64 in this knockout event that will see the elite participating from the second round onwards. Nine Indian women are in the fray with four of them Koneru Humpy, D Harika, R Vaishali and Divya Deshmukh being given direct entry into the second round.—*PTI*